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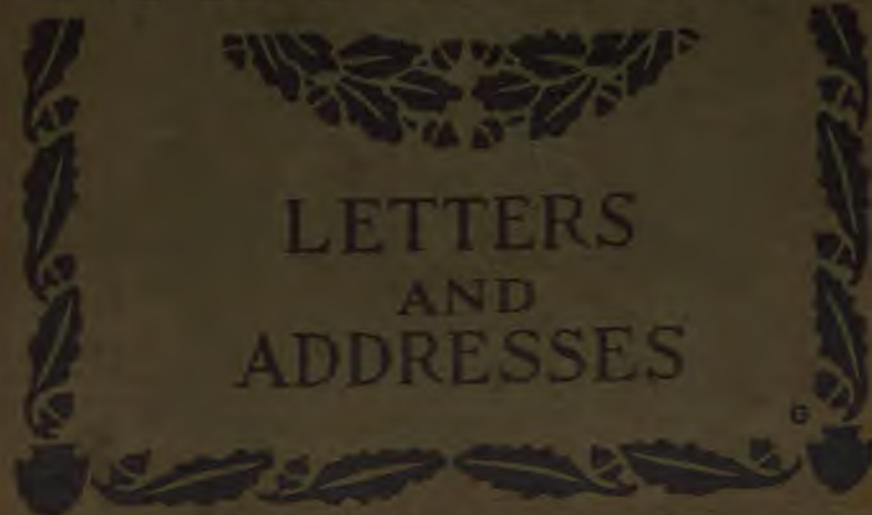
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GEORGE
WASHINGTON



LETTERS
AND
ADDRESSES





Harvard College Library

FROM

Mr. Sargent Kennedy

Cambridge, Mass.



GEORGE WASHINGTON

LETTERS AND ADDRESSES

EDITED BY

JONAS VILES

Professor of History, University of Missouri



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LETTERS AND ADDRESSES OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On a Youthful Attachment

To — — —

[1748.]

Dear Friend Robin: As it's the greatest mark of friendship and esteem, absent friends can shew each other, in writing and often communicating their thoughts, to his fellow companions, I make one endeavor to signalize myself in acquainting you, from time to time, and at all times, my situation and employments of life, and could wish you would take half the pains of contriving me a letter by any opportunity, as you may be well assured of its meeting with a very welcome reception. My place of residence is at present at his Lordship's, where I might, was my heart disengaged, pass my time very pleasantly as there's a very agreeable young lady lives in the same house, (Colonel George Fairfax's wife's sister.) But as that's only adding fuel to fire, it makes me the more uneasy, for by often, and unavoidably, being in company with her revives my former passion for your Lowland beauty; whereas, was I to live more retired from young women, I might in some measure elivate my sorrows, by burying that chaste and troublesome passion in the grave of oblivion or etarnall forgetfulness, for as I am very well assured, that's the only antidote or remedy, that I ever shall be relieved by or only recess that can administer any cure or help to me, as I am well convinced, was I ever to at-

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tempt any thing, I should get a denial which would be only adding grief to uneasiness.

Extract from "Journal to the Ohio"

1753

The Day following, we fell in with a Party of *French* Indians, who had lain in Wait for us. One of them fired at Mr. Gist or me, not 15 steps off, but fortunately missed. We took this Fellow into Custody, and kept him till about 9 o'clock at Night; Then let him go, and walked all the remaining Part of the Night without making any Stop; that we might get the Start, so far, as to be out of the Reach of their Pursuit the next Day, since we were well assured they would follow our Tract as soon as it was light. The next Day we continued travelling till quite dark, and got to the River about two Miles above *Shannapins*. We expected to have found the River frozen, but it was not, only about 50 Yards from each shore; The Ice I suppose had broken up above, for it was driving in vast Quantities. There was no Way for getting over but on a Raft; Which we set about with but one poor Hatchet, and finished just after Sun-setting. This was a whole Day's Work. Then set off; But before we were Half Way over, we were jammed in the Ice, in such a Manner that we expected every Moment our Raft to sink, and ourselves to perish. I put-out my setting Pole to try to stop the Raft, that the Ice might pass by; when the Rapidity of the Stream threw it with so much Violence against the Pole, that it jerked me out into ten Feet Water: but I fortunately saved myself by catching hold of one of the Raft Logs. Notwithstanding all our Efforts we

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could not get the Raft to either Shore; but were obliged, as we were near an Island, to quit our Raft and make to it.

The Cold was so extremely severe, that Mr. *Gist* had all his Fingers, and some of his Toes frozen; but the water was shut up so hard, that we found no Difficulty in getting-off the Island, on the Ice, in the Morning, and went to Mr. *Fraziers*.

Application for a Commission

To Richard Corbin

March, 1754.

Dear Sir: In a conversation with you at Green Spring, you gave me some room to hope for a commission above that of major, and to be ranked among the chief officers of this expedition. The command of the whole forces is what I neither look for, expect, nor desire; for I must be impartial enough to confess, it is a charge too great for my youth and inexperience to be entrusted with. Knowing this, I have too sincere a love for my country, to undertake that which may tend to the prejudice of it. But if I could entertain hopes, that you thought me worthy of the post of lieutenant-colonel, and would favor me so far as to mention it at the appointment of officers, I could not but entertain a true sense of the kindness.

I flatter myself, that, under a skilful commander, or man of sense, (whom I most sincerely wish to serve under,) with my own application and diligent study of my duty, I shall be able to conduct my steps without censure, and, in time, render myself worthy of the promotion, that I shall be favored with now.

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On His Willingness to Serve as a Volunteer

To Governor Dinwiddie

FROM OUR CAMP AT THE GREAT MEADOWS,
29 May, 1754.

Honble. Sir: I shall begin with assuring you, that nothing was farther from my intention than to recede, tho I then pressed, and still desire, that my services may be voluntary, rather than on the present pay. I am much concerned, that your Honour should seem to charge me with ingratitude for your generous, and my undeserved favours; for I assure you, Hon'ble Sir, nothing is a greater stranger to my breast, or a sin that my soul more abhors, than that black and detestable one, ingratitude. I retain a true sense of your kindnesses, and want nothing but opportunity to give testimony of my willingness to oblige, as far as my life or fortune will extend.

As to the numbers that applied for commissions, and to whom we were preferred, I believe, had those gentlemen been as knowing of this country, and as sensible of the difficulties that would attend a campaign here as I then was, I conceive your Honour would not have been so troublesomely solicited as you were. Yet I do not offer this as a reason for quitting the service. For my own part I can answer, I have a constitution hardy enough to encounter and undergo the most severe trials, and, I flatter myself, resolution to face what any man durst, as shall be proved when it comes to the test, which I believe we are on the borders of.

There is nothing, Sir (I believe), more certain than that the officers on the Canada expedition had British pay allowed, whilst they were in the service. Therefore, Honble.

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Sir, as this can't be allowed, suffer me to serve as a volunteer, which, I assure you, will be the next reward to British pay; for, as my services, so far as I have knowledge, will equal those of the best officer, I make it a point of honor [not] to serve for less, and accept a medium. Nevertheless, I have communicated your Honor's sentiments to them, and, as far as I could put on the hypocrite, set forth the advantages that may accrue, and advised them to accept the terms, as a refusal might reflect dishonor on their character, leaving it to the world to assign what reasons they please for their quitting the service. I am very sensible of the pernicious consequences that will attend their resigning, as they have by this gained some experience of the military art, have a tolerable knowledge of the country, being sent, most of them, out at different times with parties, and are now accustomed to the hardships and fatigues of living as we do, which, I believe, were it truly stated, would prevent your Honour from many troublesome solicitations from others for commissions. This last motive has and will induce me to do what I can to reconcile matters, tho I really believe there are some, that will not remain long without an alteration. They have promised to consider of it, and give your Honour an answer.

I believe it is well known we have been at the expense of regimentals, and it is still better known, that regimentals, and every other necessary, that we were under an indispensable necessity of purchasing for this expedition, were not to be bought for less Virginia currency, than British officers could get for sterling money; which they ought to have been, to put upon a parity in this respect. Then Colonel Fairfax observes that their table and other incident charges prevent them from saving much. If they don't save much they have the enjoyment of their pay, which we neither have in one sense nor the other. We are

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debarred the pleasure of good living; which, Sir, (I dare say with me you will concur,) to one who has always been used to it, must go somewhat hard to be confined to a little salt provision and water, and do duty, hard, laborious duty, that is almost inconsistent with that of a soldier, and yet the same reductions as if we were allowed luxuriously.

I would not have your Honour imagine from this, that I have said all these things to have the pay increased, but to justify myself, and shew your Honour that our complaints are not frivolous, but are founded upon strict reason. For my own part, it is a matter almost indifferent whether I serve for full pay, or as a generous volunteer. Indeed, did my circumstances correspond with my inclination, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter; for the motives that lead me here were pure and noble; I had no view of acquisition, but that of honour, by serving faithfully my king and country.

The Fight at Great Meadow

To His Brother

CAMP AT GREAT MEADOW, 31 May, 1754.

Since my last we arrived at this place, where three days ago we had an engagement with the French, that is, a party of our men with one of theirs. Most of our men were out upon other detachments, so that I had scarcely 40 men remaining under my command, and about 10 or 12 Indians; nevertheless we obtained a most signal victory. The battle lasted about 10 or 13 minutes, with sharp firing on both sides, till the French gave ground and ran, but to no great purpose. There were 12 of the French killed, among whom was Mons. de Jumonville, their commander,

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

and 21 taken prisoners, among whom are Mess. La Force and Drouillon, together with two cadets. I have sent them to his honour the Governor, at Winchester, under a guard of 20 men, conducted by Lieutenant West. We had but one man killed, and two or three wounded. Among the wounded on our side was Lieutenant Waggener, but no danger, it is hoped, will ensue. We expect every hour to be attacked by superior force, but, if they forbear one day longer, we shall be prepared for them. We have already got entrenchments, and are about a pallisado, which I hope will be finished to-day. The Mingoes have struck the French and I hope will give a good blow before they have done. I expect 40 odd of them here to-night, which, with our fort and some reinforcements from Col. Fry, will enable us to exert our noble courage with spirit.

P. S. I fortunately escaped without any wound, for the right wing, where I stood, was exposed to and received all the enemy's fire, and it was the part where the man was killed, and the rest wounded. I heard the bullets whistle, and, believe me, there is something charming in the sound.

A Bit of Gossip

To Mrs. Fairfax

FORT CUMBERLAND, 14 May, 1755.

Dear Madam: I have at last with great pains and difficulty discovered the reason why Mrs. Wardrope is a greater favorite of Genl. Braddock than Mrs. F——x, and met with more respect at the review in Alexandria. The cause I shall communicate, after having rallied you upon neglecting the means which produced the effect. And what do you think they were? why, nothing less, I assure you, than

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a present of delicious cake and potted wood-cocks! which so affected the palate as to leave a deep impression upon the hearts of *all* who tasted of them. How, then, could the General do otherwise than admire, not only the *charms*, but the politeness, of this lady!

We have a *favourable* prospect of halting here three weeks or a month longer, for waggons, horses and forage; it is easy to conceive, therefore, that my situation will not be very *pleasant* and *agreeable*, when I dreaded this (before I came out) more than all the other incidents which might happen during the campaign.

Proposal to Become a Candidate

To John A. Washington

WINCHESTER, 25 May, 1755.

Dear Brother: As I understand the County of Fairfax is to be divided, and that Mr. Alexander intends to decline serving it. I should be glad if you could come at Colo. Fairfax's intentions, and let me know whether he purposes to offer himself as a candidate. If he does not, I should be glad to take a poll, if I thought my chance tolerably good.

Majr. Carlyle mentioned it to me in Williamsburgh in a bantering way, and asked how I would like it, saying, at the same time, he did not know but they might send me, when I might know nothing of the matter, for one or t'other of the counties. I must confess I should like to go for either in that manner, but more particularly for Fairfax, as I am a resident there.

I should be glad if you could discover Maj. Carlyle's real sentiments on this head; also those of Mr. Dalton,

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Ramsay, Mason, etc, which I hope and think you may do without disclosing much of *mine*, as I know your own good sense can furnish you with contrivances.

If you should attempt any thing in this matter, pray let me know by the first opportunity how you have succeeded in it, and how those gentlemen stand affected. If they seem inclinable to promote my interests, and things should be drawing to a crisis, you then may declare my intentions, and beg their assistance. If, on the contrary, you find them more inclined to favour some other, I would have the affair entirely dropped.

The Revd. Mr. Green's and Capt. McCarty's interests in this matter would be of consequence, and I should be glad if you could *sound* their pulse upon that occasion. Conduct the whole 'till you are satisfied of the sentiments of those I have mentioned, with an air of indifference and unconcern; after that, you may regulate your conduct accordingly to circumstances.

Capt. West, the present Burgess, and our friend Jack West, could also be serviceable, if they had a mind to assist the interest of, Dear Jack, Your loving brother.

On Braddock's Defeat

To John A. Washington

FORT CUMBERLAND, 18 July, 1755.

Dear Brother: As I have heard, since my arrival at this place, a circumstantial account of my death and dying speech, I take this early opportunity of contradicting the first, and of assuring you that I have not as yet composed the latter. But, by the all-powerful dispensations of Providence, I have been protected beyond all human proba-

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bility and expectation; for I had four bullets through my coat, and two horses shot under me, yet escaped unhurt, altho' death was levelling my companions on every side of me!

We have been most scandalously beaten by a trifling body of men, but fatigue and want of time will prevent me from giving you any of the details, until I have the happiness of seeing you at Mount Vernon, which I now most ardently wish for, since we are drove in thus far. A weak and feeble state of health obliges me to halt here for two or three days, to recover a little strength, that I may thereby be enabled to proceed homewards with more ease. You may expect to see me there on Saturday or Sunday se'-night, which is as soon as I can well be down, as I shall take my Bullskin Plantations in my way. Pray give my compliments to all my friends. I am dear Jack, your most affectionate brother.

Address to the Officers of the Virginia Regiment

8 January, 1756.

This timely warning of the effects of misbehaviour will, I hope, be instrumental in animating the younger officers to a laudable emulation in the service of their country. Not that I apprehend any of them can be guilty of offences of this nature: but there are many other misdemeanors, that will, without due circumspection, gain upon inactive minds, and produce consequences equally disgraceful.

I would, therefore, earnestly recommend, in every point of duty, willingness to undertake, and intrepid resolution to execute. Remember, that it is the *actions*, and not the commission, that make the officer, and that there is more

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expected from him, than the *title*. Do not forget, that there ought to be a time appropriated to attain this knowledge, as well as to indulge pleasure. And as we now have no opportunities to improve from example, let us read for this desirable end. There is Bland's and other treatises which will give the wished-for information.

I think it my duty, gentlemen, as I have the honour to preside over you, to give this friendly admonition; especially as I am determined, as far as my small experience in service, my abilities, and interest of the service may dictate, to observe the strictest discipline through the whole economy of my behaviour. On the other hand, you may as certainly depend upon having the strictest justice administered to all, and that I shall make it the most agreeable part of my duty to study merit, and reward the brave and deserving. I assure, you, gentlemen, that partiality shall never bias my conduct, nor shall prejudice injure any; but, throughout the whole tenor of my proceedings, I shall endeavour, as far as I am able, to reward and punish, without the least diminution.

On the Distress on the Frontier

To Governor Dinwiddie

WINCHESTER, 22 April, 1756.

Honble. Sir: Your Honor may see to what unhappy straits the distressed inhabitants as well as I, am reduced. I am too little acquainted, Sir, with pathetic language, to attempt a description of the people's distresses, though I have a generous soul, sensible of wrongs, and swelling for redress. But what can I do? If bleeding, dying! would glut their insatiate revenge, I would be a willing offering

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to savage fury, and die by inches to save a people! I *see* their situation, know their danger, and participate their sufferings, without having it in my power to give them further relief, than uncertain promises. In short, I see inevitable destruction in so clear a light, that, unless vigorous measures are taken by the Assembly, and speedy assistance sent from below, the poor inhabitants that are now in the forts, must unavoidably fall, while the remainder of the country are flying before the barbarous foe. In fine, the melancholy situation of the people, the little prospect of assistance, the gross and scandalous abuses cast upon the officers in general, which is reflecting upon me in particular, for suffering misconducts of such extraordinary kinds, and the distant prospects, if any, that I can see, of gaining honor and reputation in the service, are motives which cause me to lament the hour, that gave me a commission, and would induce me, at any other time than this of imminent danger, to resign without one hesitating moment, a command, which I never expect to reap either honor or benefit from; but, on the contrary, have almost an absolute certainty of incurring displeasure below, while the murder of poor innocent babes and helpless families may be laid to my account here!

The supplicating tears of the women, and moving petitions from the men, melt me into such deadly sorrow, that I solemnly declare, if I know my own mind, I could offer myself a willing sacrifice to the butchering enemy, provided that would contribute to the people's ease.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On the Hardships of the Soldiers

To John Robinson

WINCHESTER, 5 August, 1756.

Dear Sir: At the repeated instances of the soldiers, I must pay so much regard to their representations, as to transmit their complaints. They think it extremely hard, as it is indeed, Sir, that *they*, who perhaps do more duty, and undergo more fatigue and hardship, from the nature of the service and situation of the country, than any troops upon the continent, should be allowed the *least pay*, and smallest encouragements in other respects. The Carolinians received British pay; the Marylanders, I believe, do the same; Pennsylvania is exorbitant in rewarding their soldiers; the Jerseys and New Yorkers, I do not remember what it is they give; but the New England governments give more than a shilling per day, our money, besides an allowance of rum, peas, tobacco, ginger, vinegar, &c, &c.

Our soldiers complain, that their pay is insufficient, even to furnish shoes, shirts, stockings, &c, which their officers, in order to keep them fit for duty, oblige them to provide. This, they say, deprives them of the means of purchasing any of the conveniences or necessities of life, and obliges them to drag through a disagreeable service in the most disagreeable manner. That their pay will not afford more than enough (if that) to keep them in clothes, I should be convinced of for these reasons, if experience had not taught me. The British soldiers are allowed eight pence sterling per day, with many necessities that ours are not, and can buy what is requisite upon the cheapest terms; and lie one half the year in camp, or garrison, when they cannot consume the fifth part of what ours do in continual marches

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over mountains, rocks, rivers, &c, [who are] computed to receive only — per day. Then, Sir, is it possible that our men, who receive a fourth less, have two pence per day stoppages for their regimental clothing, and all other stoppages made that British soldiers have, and are obliged, by being in continual action, to lay in triple the quantity of ammunition and clothes, and at double the price, should be able to clear quarters? It is *not* to be done, and this is the reason why the men have always been so naked and bare of clothes.

And I dare say you will be candid enough to allow, that there are few men who would choose to have their lives exposed, without some view of hope of a reward, to the incessant insults of a merciless enemy. Another thing there is which gives them great uneasiness, and that is, seeing no regular provision made for the maimed and wounded. They acknowledge the generosity of the Assembly, and have the highest veneration for that respectable House; they look with gratitude on the care, that has been taken of their brother soldiers; but say, this is only as act of *will*, and another Assembly may be much less liberal. We have no certainty, that this generosity may continue, consequently can have nothing in view but the most gloomy prospects, and no encouragement to be bold and active; and the probable effects of which are wounds, which no sooner happen and they unfit for service than they are discharged, and turned upon an uncharitable world to beg, steal, or starve! In short, they have a true sense of all that can happen, and do not think slightly of the fatigues they encounter, in scouring these mountains with their provisions on their backs, lying out and watching for the enemy, with no other covering or convenience to shelter them from the inclemency of the weather, than trees and rocks! The old soldiers are affected, and complain

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of their hardships and *little* encouragement in piteous terms; and they give these as reasons for so much desertion. The money that is given in paying for deserters, expresses, horse-hire, losses and abuse of horses, would go a great length toward advancing their pay, which I hope would contribute not a little to remove the cause of this expense. I would not have it here understood, tho', that I mean to recommend any thing extraordinary; no, I would give them British pay, and entitle them to the same privileges during their stay in the service, and as a reward or compliment for their toil, rather than a matter of right. Were the country to give them one suit of regimental clothes a year, without receiving the two pence stoppage, it would be a full allowance, and give great content and satisfaction. All they want (they say) is to be entitled to the privileges and immunities of soldiers, of which they are well informed, by some who have been a number of years in the army, then they should think it no hardship to be subject to the punishments and fatigues. Were this done, and an order given by the Committee empowering me to provide for them, according to the rules and customs of the army, I then should know what I was about, and I could do it without hesitation or fear, and, am convinced, to the satisfaction and interest of the country. As the case *now* stands, we are upon such odd establishment, under such uncertain regulations, and subject to so much inconvenience, that I am wandering in a wilderness of difficulties, and am ignorant of the ways to extricate myself, and to steer for the satisfaction of the country, the soldiers, or myself. Having no certain rules for the direction of my conduct, I am afraid to turn to this hand or to that, lest it should be censured. If such an order, as I before spoke of, was to issue from your Board, I would then immediately provide upon the best terms a quantity of all kinds

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of ammunition, clothes, &c. for the use of the regiment, and deliver them out to each company, as their wants required, taking care to deduct the value of all such things from their pay. By this means the soldiers would be always provided and fit for duty, and do it cheerfully, and the country sustains no other loss, than advancing and lying out of the money for a few months to lay in those stores, as this money is always restored by the soldiers again.

On the Disadvantages of Militia

To Governor Dinwiddie

WINCHESTER, 9 November, 1756.

Honble. Sir: First, of the militia. The difficulty of collecting them on any emergency whatever, I have often spoken of as grievous; and I appeal to sad experience, both in this and other counties, how great a disadvantage it is; the enemy having every opportunity to plunder, kill, and escape, before they can afford any assistance. And not to mention the expensiveness of their service in general, I can instance several cases, where a captain, lieutenant, and, I may add, an ensign, with two or three sergeants, and six or eight men, will go upon duty at a time. The proportion of expense in this case is so unjust and obvious, your Honor wants not to be proved.

Then these men, when raised, are to be continued only one month on duty, half of which time is lost in their marching out and home, (especially those from the adjacent counties,) who must be on duty some time before they reach their stations; by which means double sets of men are in pay at the same time, and for the same service.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

Again, the waste of provision they make is unaccountable; no method or order in being served or purchasing at the best rates, but quite the reverse. Allowance for each man, as other soldiers do, they look upon as the highest indignity, and would *sooner* starve, than carry a few days' provision on their backs for conveniency. But upon their march, when breakfast is wanted, knock down the first beef, &c, they meet with, and, after regaling themselves, march on until dinner, when they take the same method, and so for supper likewise, to the great oppression of the people. Or, if they chance to impress cattle for provision, the valuation is left to ignorant and indifferent neighbours, who have suffered by those practices, and, despairing of their pay, exact high prices, and thus the public is imposed on at all events. I might add, I believe, that, for the want of proper laws to govern the militia by (for I cannot ascribe it to any other cause), they are obstinate, self-willed, perverse, of little or no service to the people, and very burthensome to the country. Every *mean* individual has his own crude notions of things, and must undertake to direct. If his advice is neglected, he thinks himself slighted, abused, and injured; and, to redress his wrongs, will depart for his home. These, Sir, are literally matters of fact, partly from persons of undoubted veracity, but chiefly from my own observations.

The wretched and unhappy situation of the inhabitants needs few words, after a slight reflection on the preceding circumstances, which must certainly draw after them very melancholy consequences without speedy redress. They are truly sensible of their misery; they feel their insecurity from militia preservation, who are slow in coming to their assistance, indifferent about their preservation, unwilling to continue, and regardless of every thing but their own ease. In short, they are so affected with approaching ruin,

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that the whole back country is in a general motion towards the southern colonies; and I expect that scarce a family will inhabit Frederick, Hampshire, or Augusta, in a little time. They petitioned me in the most earnest manner for companies of the regiment. But alas! it is not in my power to assist them with any, except I leave this dangerous quarter more exposed than they are. I promised, at their particular request, to address your Honor and the Assembly in their behalf, and that a regular force may be established in lieu of the militia and ranging companies, which are of much less service, and infinitely more cost to the country. Were this done, the whole would be under one direction, and any misbehaviour could never pass with impunity. Whereas the others are soldiers at will, and in fact will go and come when and where they please, without regarding the orders or directions of any. And, indeed, the manner in which some of the ranging captains have obtained their commissions, if I am rightly informed, is by imposture and artifice. They produce a list, I am told, to your Honor, of sundry persons, who are willing to serve under them. One part, it is said, are of fictitious names; another, the names of persons who never saw the list; and the remainder are persons drawn into it by fallacious promises, that cannot be complied with without detriment to the service. But were it otherwise, surely any person, who considers the pay of the soldiers and that of the militia, will find a considerable difference, tho' both under the best regulations.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

An Explanation

To Governor Dinwiddie

ALEXANDRIA, 24 November, 1756.

Honble. Sir: I am very sorry any expression in my letter should be deemed unmannerly. I never intended insults to any; on the contrary, have endeavoured to demean myself in that proper respect due to superiors. When I went to Augusta, it was with a good design, to relieve, if possible, a much distressed settlement; but finding this impracticable without men, and hearing some complaints of Captain Hog, and at the same time being desirous of seeing in what manner he proceeded, I continued on in no small danger; yet pleased with reflecting on this extraordinary duty, and of bringing myself more intimately acquainted with the situation of our frontiers, which, Sir, I related as well as I was capable, with a design, from which I have never intentionally swerved, to serve my country. And am sorry to find, that this, and my best endeavours of late, meet with unfavorable constructions. What it proceeds from, I know not. If my open and disinterested way of writing and speaking has the *air* of pertness and freedom, I shall correct my error by acting reservedly, and shall take care to obey my orders without offering any thing more.

A Defence of Motives

To the Speaker of the House of Burgesses

December, 1756.

Dear Sir: It gave me infinite concern to hear by several letters, that the Assembly are incensed against the Vir-

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ginia Regiment; and think they have cause to accuse the officers of all inordinate vices; but more especially of drunkenness and profanity! How far any *one* individual may have subjected himself to such reflections, I will not pretend to determine, but this I am certain of; and can with the highest safety call my conscience, my God! and (what I suppose will still be a more demonstrable proof, at least in the eye of the World) the Orders and Instructions which I have given, to evince the purity of my own intentions and to shew on the one hand, that my incessant endeavours have been directed to discountenance Gaming, drinking, swearing, and other vices, with which all camps too much abound: while on the other, I have used every expedient to inspire a laudable emulation in the officers, and an unerring exercise of Duty in the Soldiers. How far I may have mistaken the means to attain so salutary an end behoves not me to determine: But this I presume to say, that a man's *intentions* should be allowed in some respects to plead for his actions. I have been more explicit Sir, on this head than I otherwise shou'd, because I find that my own character must of necessity be involved in the general censure, for which reason I can not help observing, that if the country think they have cause to condemn my conduct, and have a person in view that will act; that *he* may do. But who will endeavour to act more for her Interests than I have done? It will give me the greatest pleasure to resign a command which I solemnly declare I accepted against my will.

I know, Sir, that my inexperience may have led me into innumerable errors. For which reason, I shou'd think myself an unworthy member of the community and greatly deficient in the love I owe my country which has been the first principle of my actions, were I to require more than a distant hint of its dissatisfaction to resign a com-

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mission which I confess to you I am no ways fond of keeping.

However, I am far from attempting to vindicate the characters of all the officers; For that I am sensible would be a task too arduous. There are some who have the seeds of Idleness too strongly instilled into their constitution, either to be serviceable to themselves, or beneficial to the Country. Yet even those have not missed my best advice: nor have my unwearied endeavours ever been wanting to serve my country with the highest integrity. For which reasons I shou'd ever be content in retirement, and reflect with no little pleasure, that no sordid views have influenced my conduct, nor have the hopes of unlawful gains swerved me in any measure from the strictest dictates of Honor! I have diligently sought the public welfare; and have endeavoured to inculcate the same principles on all that are under me. These reflections will be a cordial to my mind as long as I am able to distinguish between Good & Evil.

An Account of His Situation

To Richard Washington, Merchant, London

FORT LOUDOUN, 15 April, 1757.

Dear Sir: After so long silence it may be expected, I should introduce this letter with an apology for my seeming neglect. It is necessary to urge something in my defence, I own, Sir, that I may satisfy you it proceeds from a very different cause than the want of inclination, and what can be so proper as the truth?

I have been posted, then, for twenty months past upon our cold and barren frontiers, to perform, I think I may say, impossibilities; that is, to protect from the cruel in-

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cursions of a crafty, savage enemy a line of inhabitants, of more than three hundred and fifty miles in extent, with a force inadequate to the task. By this means I am become in a manner an exile, and seldom informed of those opportunities, which I might otherwise embrace, of corresponding with my friends.

Experience has convinced every thinking man in this colony, that we must bid adieu to peace and safety whilst the French are allowed to possess the Ohio, and to practise their hellish arts among the numerous tribes of Indian nations that inhabit those regions. They are also convinced that it must be attended with an expense infinitely greater to defend our possessions, (as they ought to be defended) against the skulking enemy, than to remove the cause of our groundless fears, in the reduction of the place Fort Duquesne I mean. Yet, from what strange causes I know not, no attempt this season will be made, I fear, to destroy this hold of barbarians, for they deserve no better name, who have become a terror to three populous colonies. Virginia may justly say, that she was always willing to furnish her full proportion of men and money for this desirable end; and, I think I can venture to affirm, that there never was, and verily I believe never will be, a more favorable time than the present for an enterprise of this kind, while the enemy's troops are doubtless drawn off to the northward, to defend themselves at home against the more formidable attacks of Lord Loudoun.

I have now to add, that I am so little acquainted with the business relative to my private affairs, that I can scarce give you any information concerning it. I know that I ought to have some tobacco, and that it ought to be shipped. I have begged the favor of Colo. Carlyle on Potomack, and Fielding Lewis Esqr., on Rappahannock, to do this for me, and I desired them to write you in my behalf,

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and draw for sundry things which I am in want of; but whether any part or all of this is done, I know not. I shall, therefore, desire these two things of you; first, that you may put yourself to no real inconvenience in providing goods to a greater amount than my remittances will fetch, because I by no means intended to be troublesome, when I solicited your correspondence; and, secondly, that whatever goods you may send me, where the prices are not absolutely limited, you will let them be fashionable, neat, and good in their several kinds. Enclosed is a list of sundries, which I should be glad to receive agreeably to those directions.

A Defence of His Conduct

To Governor Dinwiddie

FORT LOUDOUN, 27 August, 1757.

Sir: I must beg leave to observe in justification of my own conduct, that it is with pleasure I receive reproof, when reproof is due, because no person can be readier to accuse me, than I am to acknowledge an error, when I am guilty of one; nor more desirous of atoning for a crime, when I am sensible of having committed it. But, on the other hand, it is with concern I remark, that my best endeavors lose their reward, and that my conduct, although I have uniformly studied to make it as unexceptional as I could, does not appear to you in a favorable point of light. Otherwise your Honor would not have accused me of *loose* behaviour and *remissness* of duty, in matters where, I believe, I have rather exceeded than fallen short of it. This, I think, is evidently the case in speaking of Indian Affairs at all after being instructed in very

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express terms, not to have any concern with or "management of Indian affairs." This has caused me to forbear mentioning of Indians in any of my letters to your Honor of late, and to leave the misunderstanding, which you speak of, between Mr. Atkin and the Indians, to the former to relate, knowing that he maintained a correspondence with your Honor on matters relative to his office. But, with regard to the accompts, when *he* would have nothing to do with them, and when I was hourly importuned for the payment, and knew I had not means to do it, what could I do less than promise the people, that I would recommend their cases to your Honor, in hopes that you would appoint a person, in whom you could confide, to take in and pay off their accompts, as I always looked upon it as a duty distinct from mine, and therefore was unwilling to intermeddle in the affair?

Thanks for Aid in Election

To Colonel James Wood

[July, 1758.]

My Dear Colonel: If thanks flowing from a heart replete with joy and Gratitude can in any Measure compensate for the fatigue, anxiety and Pain you had at my Election, be assured you have them; 'tis a poor, but I am convinced, welcome tribute to a generous Mind. Such, I believe yours to be.

How I shall thank Mrs. Wood for her favorable Wishes, and how acknowledge my sense of obligations to the People in general for their choice of me, I am at a loss to resolve on. But why? Can I do it more effectually than by making their Interest (as it really is) my own, and doing

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everything that lyes in my little Power for the Honor and welfare of the Country? I think not; and my best endeavors they may always command. I promise this now, when promises may be regarded, before they might pass as words of course.

I am extreme thankful to you and my other friends for entertaining the Freeholders in my name. I hope no Exception was taken to any that voted against me, but that all were alike treated, and all had enough. It is what I much desired. My only fear is that you spent with too sparing a hand.

I don't like to touch upon our Public Affairs. The Prospect is overspread by too many ills to give a favourable account. I will, therefore, say little, but yet say this; that backwardness appears in all things but the approach of winter—— That jogs on apace.

To His Betrothed

To Mrs. Martha Custis

20 July, 1758.

We have begun our march for the Ohio. A courier is starting for Williamsburg, and I embrace the opportunity to send a few words to one whose life is now inseparable from mine. Since that happy hour when we made our pledges to each other, my thoughts have been continually going to you as another Self. That an all-powerful Providence may keep us both in safety is the prayer of your ever faithful and affectionate friend.

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On Duty before Private Opinion

To Colonel Bouquet

CAMP AT FORT CUMBERLAND, 6 August, 1758.

Dear Sir: The General's orders,—or the order of any Superior Officer will, when once given, be a law to me. I shall never hesitate in obeying them; but, till this order came out, I thought it incumbent upon me to say what I could to divert you (the Commanding Officer present) from a resolution of opening a new road, of which I had the most unfavorable reports, and believe from the height of the hills,—the steepness of them, the unevenness of the ground in general,—and what above all principally weighed with me the shortness of the Season, that it was impossible to open a road in time to answer our purpose. I am still in this opinion, partly from my own observations of the country, and partly from the information of as good judges as any that will be employed. My duty therefore to his Majesty, and the Colony whose troops I have the honor to command, obliged me to declare my sentiments upon the occasion with that candor and freedom of which you are witness. If I am deceived in my opinion, I shall acknowledge my error as becomes a gentleman led astray from judgment, and not by prejudice, in opposing a measure so conducive to the public Weal as you seem to have conceived this to be. If I unfortunately am right, my conduct will acquit me of having discharged my duty on this important occasion; on the good success of which, our all, in a manner depends.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

A Letter of Compliment—Announcement of Betrothal

To Mrs. George William Fairfax

CAMP AT FORT CUMBERLAND, 12 September, 1758.

Dear Madam: Yesterday I was honored with your short but very agreeable favor of the first inst. How joyfully I catch at the happy occasion of renewing a correspondence which I feared was disrelished on your part, I leave to time, that never failing expositor of all things, and to a monitor equally faithful in my own breast, to testify. In silence I now express my joy; silence, which in some cases, I wish the present, speaks more intelligently than the sweetest eloquence.

If you allow that any honor can be derived from my opposition to our present system of management, you destroy the merit of it entirely in me by attributing my anxiety to the animating prospect of possessing Mrs. Custis, when—I need not tell you, guess yourself. Should not my own Honor and country's welfare be the excitement? 'Tis true, I profess myself a votary of love. I acknowledge that a lady is in the case, and further I confess that this lady is known to you. Yes, Madame, as well as she is to one who is too sensible of her charms to deny the Power whose influence he feels and must ever submit to. I feel the force of her amiable beauties in the recollection of a thousand tender passages that I could wish to obliterate, till I am bid to revive them. But experience, alas! sadly reminds me how impossible this is, and evinces an opinion which I have long entertained, that there is a Destiny which has the control of our actions, not to be resisted by the strongest efforts of Human Nature.

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You have drawn me, dear Madame, or rather I have drawn myself, into an honest confession of a simple Fact. Misconstrue not my meaning; doubt it not, nor expose it. The world has no business to know the object of my Love, declared in this manner to you, when I want to conceal it. One thing above all things in this world I wish to know, and only one person of your acquaintance can solve me that, or guess my meaning. But adieu to this till happier times, if I ever shall see them. The hours at present are melancholy dull. Neither the rugged toils of war, nor the gentler conflict of Assembly Balls, is in my choice. I dare believe you are as happy as you say. I wish I was happy also. Mirth, good humor, ease of mind, and—what else?—cannot fail to render you so and consummate your wishes.

If one agreeable lady could almost wish herself a fine gentleman for the sake of another, I apprehend that many fine gentlemen will wish themselves finer e'er Mrs. Spotswood is possest. She has already become a reigning toast in this camp, and many there are in it who intend (fortune favoring) to make honorable scars speak the fullness of their merit, and be a messenger of their Love to Her.

I cannot easily forgive the unseasonable haste of my last express, if he deprived me thereby of a single word you intended to add. The time of the present messenger is, as the last might have been, entirely at your disposal. I can't expect to hear from my friends more than this once before the fate of the expedition will some how or other be determined. I therefore beg to know when you set out for Hampton, and when you expect to return to Belvoir again. And I should be glad also to hear of your speedy departure, as I shall thereby hope for your return before I get down. The disappointment of seeing your family

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would give me much concern. From anything I can yet see 'tis hardly possible to say when we shall finish. I don't think there is a probability of it till the middle of November. Your letter to Captain Gist I forwarded by a safe hand the moment it came to me. His answer shall be carefully transmitted.

Col. Mercer, to whom I delivered your message and compliments, joins me very heartily in wishing you and the Ladies of Belvoir the perfect enjoyment of every happiness this world affords. Be assured that I am, dear Madame, with the most unfeigned regard, your most obedient and most obliged humble servant.

On His Retirement

To Richard Washington

MOUNT VERNON, 20 September, 1759.

Dear Sir: My Brother is safe arrivd but little benefitted in point of Health by his Trip to England. The longing desire, which for many years I have had of visiting the great Matropolis of that Kingdom is not in the least abated by his prejudices, because I think the small share of Health he enjoyed while there must have given a sensible check to any pleasures he might figure to himself, and woud render any place Irksome—but I am now tied by the Leg and must set Inclination aside.

The Scale of Fortune in America is turnd greatly in our favor, and success is become the boon Companion of our Fortunate Generals. Twoud be folly in me to attempt particularizing their Actions since you receive acct. in a channel so much more direct than from hence. I am now I believe fixd at this seat with an agreable Consort for

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Life. And hope to find more happiness in retirement than I ever experienced amidst a wide and bustling World—I thank you heartily for your affectionate wishes—why wont you give me an occasion of Congratulating you in the same manner? None would do it with more cordiality and true sincerity than, Dear Sir, &c.

An Order for Clothes

To Richard Washington

MOUNT VERNON, 20 October, 1761.

Dear Sir: On the other side is an invoice of clothes, which I beg the favor of you to purchase for me, and to send them by the first ship bound to this river. As they are designed for wearing-apparel for myself, I have committed the choice of them to your fancy, having the best opinion of your taste. I want neither lace nor embroidery. Plain clothes, with a gold or silver button, (if worn in genteel dress,) are all I desire. I have hitherto had my clothes made by one Charles Lawrence, in Old Fish Street. But whether it be the fault of the tailor, or the measure sent, I cant say, but, certain it is, my clothes have never fitted me well. I therefore leave the choice of the workman to your care likewise. I enclose a measure, and, for a further insight, I don't think it amiss to add, that my stature is six feet; otherwise rather slender than corpulent.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On the Stamp Act

To Francis Dandridge, London

MOUNT VERNON, 20 September, 1765.

Sir: If you will permit me, after six years' silence,—the time I have been married to your niece,—to pay my respects to you in this epistolary way, I shall think myself happy in beginning a correspondence, which cannot but be attended with pleasure on my side.

I should hardly have taken the liberty, Sir, of introducing myself to your acquaintance in this manner, and at this time, lest you should think my motives for doing of it arose from sordid views, had not a letter which I received sometime this summer from Robert Cary, Esqr. & Co., given me reasons to believe, that such an advance on my side would not be altogether disagreeable on yours. Before this I rather apprehended that some disgust at the news of your niece's marriage with me—why I could not tell—might have been the cause of your silence upon that event, and discontinuing a correspondence which before then you had kept up with her; but if I could only flatter myself, that you would in anywise be entertained with the few occurrences, that it might be in my power to relate from hence, I should endeavor to atone for my past remissness, in this respect, by future punctuality.

At present few things are under notice of my observation that can afford you any amusement in the recital. The Stamp Act, imposed on the colonies by the Parliament of Great Britain, engrosses the conversation of the speculative part of the colonists, who look upon this unconstitutional method of taxation, as a direful attack upon their liberties, and loudly exclaim against the violation. What may be

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the result of this, and of some other (I think I may add) ill-judged measures, I will not undertake to determine; but this I may venture to affirm, that the advantage accruing to the mother country will fall greatly short of the expectations of the ministry; for certain it is, that our whole substance does already in a manner flow to Great Britain, and that whatsoever contributes to lessen our importations must be hurtful to their manufacturers. And the eyes of our people, already beginning to open, will perceive, that many luxuries, which we lavish our substance in Great Britain for, can well be dispensed with, whilst the necessities of life are (mostly) to be had within ourselves. This, consequently, will introduce frugality, and be a necessary stimulation to industry. If Great Britain, therefore, loads her manufacturies with heavy taxes, will it not facilitate these measures? They will not compel us, I think, to give our money for their exports, whether we will or not; and certain, I am none of their traders will part from them without a valuable consideration. Where, then, is the utility of these restrictions?

As to the Stamp Act, taken in a single view, one and the first bad consequence attending it, I take to be this, our courts of judicature must inevitably be shut up; for it is impossible, (or next of kin to it), under our present circumstances, that the act of Parliament can be complied with, were we ever so willing to enforce the execution; for, not to say, which alone would be sufficient, that we have not money to pay the stamps, there are many other cogent reasons, to prevent it; and if a stop be put to our judicial proceedings, I fancy the merchants of Great Britain, trading to the colonies, will not be among the last to wish for a repeal of it.

I live upon Potomack River in Fairfax county, about ten miles below Alexandria, and many miles distant from

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any of my wife's relations, who all reside upon York River, and whom we seldom see more than once a year, and not always that. My wife, who is very well, and Master and Miss Custis, (children of her former marriage,) all join in making a tender of their duty and best respects to yourself and their aunt. My compliments to your lady, I beg may also be made acceptable, and that you will do me the justice to believe that I am, dear Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

On the Folly of Borrowing—Advantages of the West

To Captain John Posey

MOUNT VERNON, 24 June, 1767.

Sir: I wish with all my heart you may be strengthened by some able and friendly hand in such a manner as to keep your effects together, provided it may turn to your future good in enabling you to work thro' the load of debt you seem to be entangled in; but that it is entirely out of my power, without selling part of my own estate, to contribute further thereto, you may easily be convinced of when I tell you, and affirm it, that I find it next to impossible to extract any part of the money which is due to me; that I have struggled to the utmost of my power for two years past unsuccessfully, to raise four or five hundred pounds to lend a very particular friend of mine, who I know must sell part of his estate without it; and that I have not yet discharged the sums you involved me in the payment of before, having my bond out to Mr. Green's estate for the £260 you borrowed of him. I cannot raise money to discharge it, altho' I have used my true en-

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deavors for that purpose. Add to these some engagements of my own which there is a necessity of complying with, or doing acts of injustice.

How absurd and idle would it be then, under these circumstances, to enter myself security for the payment of your debts, unless I foresaw some prospect of raising the money. True it is, some of your creditors might agree to wait; others, 'tis presumeable, would not, and certain it is pay day must come to all. What then is to be done? To tell a man who had been disappointed from time to time, and at last had waited in confidence of receiving his money from me, that I was unprovided with the means of satisfying his demand, would be galling to me, unjust to him, and what I can by no means think of practising. The only favor, therefore, that is in my power to shew you, is to be easy and forbearing in my own demands, which I shall endeavor to do as long as I can with any sort of convenience to myself, notwithstanding I am in want of the money. And to point out any person who could lend so much money even if they liked the security, I am equally at a loss to do. But few there are, I believe, who would choose to risk their money (unless influenced by motives of compassion) upon such hazardous and perishable articles as negroes, stock and chattels, which are to be swept off by innumerable distempers and subject to many accidents and misfortunes. So upon the whole you will excuse me I hope if I am inclined to offer you the same advice I would give to my brother were he under the same circumstances, and that is, if you find it impracticable to keep your estate together for at least three or four years, till the country, I mean the indebted part of it, can emerge a little from the distress it must unavoidably fall into from the pressing of creditors and want of cash, then to sell off immediately (I mean this fall at furthest) before cash

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grows into greater demand, which it inevitably will do as our currency is called in, and everything of consequence sell worse; therewith discharging all your debts, beginning with the sales of such things as can be best spared, and so raising to negroes, and even land if requisite. For if the whole should go, there is a large field before you, an opening prospect in the back country for adventurers, where numbers resort to, and where an enterprising man with very little money may lay the foundation of a noble estate in the new settlements upon Monongahela for himself and posterity. The surplus money which you might save after discharging your debts would possibly secure you as much land as in the course of twenty years would sell for five times your present estate. For proof of which, only look to Frederick, and see what fortunes were made by the Hite's and first taking up of those lands. Nay, how the greatest estates we have in this colony were made. Was it not by taking up and purchasing at very low rates the rich back lands, which were thought nothing of in those days, but are now the most valuable lands we possess? Undoubtedly it was, and to pursue this plan is the advice I would offer my brother were he in your situation; but to you I only drop it as a hint for your serious reflection, because I do not expect, nor would by any means wish, to see you adopt any scheme of mine without duly attending to it, weighing, and well considering of it in all points, and advising with your friends. I would only ask whether it would be better to labor under a load of debt where you are, which must inevitably keep you in continual anxiety and dread of your creditors, be selling the produce of your labour at under value (the never failing consequence of necessitous circumstances), with other evils too obvious to need enumeration, and which must forever lend a helping hand to keep you low and distressed; or to pluck up reso-

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lution at once and disengage yourself of those incumbrances and vexations, abiding where you are if you can save your land and have a prospect of reaping future advantages from it, or to remove back, where there is a moral certainty of laying the foundation of good estates to your children—I say I would but ask which of these two is the best, and leave you to think of them at leisure, with the assurance on my part, that what I have propounded to you on this subject proceeds from the utmost sincerity and candor, and if you will have recourse to the publick Gazettes, you may perceive by the number of estates which are continually advertising for sale, that you are not the only one under misfortune, and that many good families are retiring into the interior parts of the country for the benefit of their children. Some of the best gentlemen in this country talk of doing so, who are not drove by necessity, but adopt the scheme from principles of gain. Whatever resolution you may come to, I wish you success in it.

Directions for a Chariot

To Robert Cary & Company

MOUNT VERNON, 6 June, 1768.

Gentlemen: My old chariot having run its race, and gone through as many stages as I could conveniently make it travel, is now rendered incapable of any further service. The intent of this letter, therefore, is to desire you will bespeak me a new one, time enough to come out with the goods (I shall hereafter write for) by Captn. Johnston, or some other ship.

As these are kind of articles that last with care against number of years, I would willingly have the chariot you

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may now send me made in the newest taste, handsome, genteel and light; yet not slight, and consequently unserviceable; to be made of the best seasoned wood, and by a celebrated workman. The last importation which I have seen, besides the customary steel springs, have others that play in a brass barrel and contribute at one and the same time to the ease and ornament of the carriage. One of this kind, therefore, would be my choice; and green being a color little apt, as I apprehend, to fade, and grateful to the eye, I would give it the preference, unless any other color more in vogue and equally lasting is entitled to precedence. In that case I would be governed by fashion. A light gilding on the mouldings (that is, round the panels) and any other ornaments, that may not have a heavy and tawdry look (together with my arms agreeable to the impression here sent) might be added, by way of decoration. A lining of a handsome, lively colored leather of good quality I should also prefer, such as green, blue, or &c., as may best suit the color of the outside. Let the box that slips under the seat be as large as it conveniently can be made (for the benefit of storage upon a journey), and to have a pole (not shafts) for the wheel horses to draw by; together with a handsome set of harness for four middle sized horses ordered in such a manner as to suit either two postilions (without a box), or a box and a postilion. The box being made to fix on, and take off occasionally, with a hammel cloth &c., suitable to the lining. On the harness let my crest be engraved.

If such a chariot as I have here described could be got at second hand, little or nothing the worse for wear, but at the same time a good deal under the first cost of a new one (and sometimes though perhaps rarely it happens so), it would be very desirable; but if I am obliged to go near to the original cost, I would even have one made, and have

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been thus particular in hopes of getting a handsome chariot through your direction, good taste and management—not of copper, however, for these do not stand the powerful heat of our sun.

Offer to Educate a Promising Youth

To William Ramsay

MOUNT VERNON, 29 January, 1769.

Dear Sir: Having once or twice of late heard you speak highly in praise of the Jersey College, as if you had a desire of sending your son William there (who, I am told, is a youth fond of study and instruction, and disposed to a sedentary studious life, in following of which he may not only promote his own happiness, but the future welfare of others), I should be glad, if you have no other objection to it than what may arise from the expense, if you would send him there as soon as it is convenient, and depend on me for twenty-five pounds this currency a year for his support, so long as it may be necessary for the completion of his education. If I live to see the accomplishment of this term, the sum here stipulated shall be annually paid; and if I die in the mean while, this letter shall be obligatory upon my heirs, or executors, to do it according to the true intent and meaning hereof. No other return is expected, or wished, for this offer, than that you will accept it with the same freedom and good will, with which it is made, and that you may not even consider it in the light of an obligation, or mention it as such; for, be assured, that from me it will never be known.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On Passive Resistance to Great Britain

To George Mason

MOUNT VERNON, 5 April, 1769.

Dear Sir: Herewith you will receive a letter and sundry papers, which were forwarded to me a day or two ago by Dr. Ross of Bladensburg. I transmit them with the greater pleasure, as my own desire of knowing your sentiments upon a matter of this importance exactly coincides with the Doctor's inclinations.

At a time, when our lordly masters in Great Britain will be satisfied with nothing less than the deprivation of American freedom, it seems highly necessary that something should be done to avert the stroke, and maintain the liberty, which we have derived from our ancestors. But the manner of doing it, to answer the purpose effectually, is the point in question.

That no man should scruple, or hesitate a moment, to use a—ms in defence of so valuable a blessing, on which all the good and evil of life depends, is clearly my opinion. Yet a—ms, I would beg leave to add, should be the last resource, the *dernier resort*. Addresses to the throne, and remonstrances to Parliament, we have already, it is said, proved the inefficacy of. How far, then, their attention to our rights and privileges is to be awakened or alarmed, by starving their trade and manufactures, remains to be tried.

The northern colonies, it appears, are endeavoring to adopt this scheme. In my opinion it is a good one, and must be attended with salutary effects, provided it can be carried pretty generally into execution. But to what extent it is practicable to do so, I will not take upon me to determine. That there will be difficulties attending the

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execution of it every where, from clashing interests, and selfish, designing men, (ever attentive to their own gain, and watchful of every turn, that can assist their lucrative views, in preference to every other consideration) cannot be denied; but in the tobacco colonies, where the trade is so diffused, and in a manner wholly conducted by factors for their principals at home, these difficulties are certainly enhanced, but I think not insurmountably increased, if the gentlemen in their several counties will be at some pains to explain matters to the people, and stimulate them to a cordial agreement to purchase none but certain enumerated articles out of any of the stores after such a period, nor import nor purchase any themselves. This, if it did not effectually withdraw the factors from their importations, would at least make them extremely cautious in doing it, as the prohibited goods could be vended to none but the non-associators, or those who would pay no regard to their association; both of whom ought to be stigmatized, and made the objects of public reproach.

The more I consider a scheme of this sort, the more ardently I wish success to it, because I think there are private as well as public advantages to result from it,—the former certain, however precarious the other may prove. For in respect to the latter, I have always thought, that by virtue of the same power, (for here alone the authority derives) which assumes the right of taxation, they may attempt at least to restrain our manufactories, especially those of a public nature, the same equity and justice prevailing in the one case as the other, it being no greater hardship to forbid my manufacturing, than it is to order me to buy goods of them loaded with duties, for the express purpose of raising a revenue. But as a measure of this sort would be an additional exertion of arbitrary power, we cannot be worsted, I think, by putting it to the test.

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On the other hand, that the colonies are considerably indebted to Great Britain, is a truth universally acknowledged. That many families are reduced almost, if not quite, to penury and want from the low ebb of their fortunes, and estates daily selling for the discharge of debts, the public papers furnish but too many melancholy proofs of, and that a scheme of this sort will contribute more effectually than any other I can devise to emerge the country from the distress it at present labors under, I do most firmly believe, if it can be generally adopted. And I can see but one set of people (the merchants excepted,) who will not, or ought not, to wish well to the scheme, and that is those who live genteelly and hospitably on clear estates. Such as these, were they not to consider the valuable object in view, and the good of others, might think it hard to be curtailed in their living and enjoyments. For as to the penurious man, he saves his money and he saves his credit, having the best plea for doing that, which before, perhaps, he had the most violent struggles to refrain from doing. The extravagant and expensive man has the same good plea to retrench his expenses. He is thereby furnished with a pretext to live within bounds, and embraces it. Prudence dictated economy to him before, but his resolution was too weak to put it in practice; For how can I, *says he*, who have lived in such and such a manner, change my method? I am ashamed to do it, and, besides, such an alteration in the system of my living will create suspicions of the decay in my fortune, and such a thought the world must not harbour. I will e'en continue my course, till at last the course discontinues the estate a sale of it being the consequence of his perseverance in error. This I am satisfied is the way, that many, who have set out in the wrong track, have reasoned, till ruin stares them in the face. And in respect to the poor and needy man, he is

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only left in the same situation that he was found,—better, I might say, because, as he judges from comparison, his condition is amended in proportion as it approaches nearer to those above him.

Upon the whole, therefore, I think the scheme a good one, and that it ought to be tried here, with such alterations as the exigency of our circumstances renders absolutely necessary. But how, and in what manner to begin the work, is a matter worthy of consideration, and whether it can be attempted with propriety or efficacy (further than a communication of sentiments to one another,) before May, when the Court and Assembly will meet in Williamsburg, and a uniform plan can be concerted, and sent into the different counties to operate at the same time and in the same manner everywhere, is a thing I am somewhat in doubt upon, and should be glad to know your opinion of.

On the Advantages of Travel

To Dr. Boucher

MOUNT VERNON, 13 May, 1770.

Sir: Your favor of the 9th came to hand last night, but I do not think myself prepared at this time to give any conclusive answer to the question you propounded, respecting Mr. Custis's travelling to perfect his Education.

It is a matter of very great consequence and well deserving of the most serious consideration, especially (by) one who stands in the degree of affinity to him that I do. A natural parent has only two things principally to consider, the improvement of his son, and the finances to do it with: if he fails in the first (not through his own neglect) he laments it as a misfortune; if exceeded in the Second,

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he endeavors to correct it as an abuse unaccountable to any, and regardless of what the world may say, who do not, cannot suspect him of acting upon any other motive than the good of the party; he is to satisfy himself only. But this is not the case with respect to guardians: they are not only to be actuated by the same motives which govern in the other case, but are to consider in what light their conduct may be viewed by those whom the constitution hath placed as a controuling power over them; because a faupas committed by them often incurs the severest censure, and sometimes punishment; when the intention may be strictly laudable.

From what I have said, you may possibly conceive that I am averse to his travelling, for the completion of his education; but be assured, Sir, I am not; there is nothing, in my opinion more desirable to form the manners and encrease the knowledge of observant youth than such a plan as you have sketched out; and I beg of you to believe, that there is no gentleman under whose care Mrs. Washington and myself would so soon entrust Mr. Custis as yourself (after he is sufficiently instructed in classical knowledge here). It may be depended on therefore, that the gratification of this passion in him, will never meet with any interruption from me, and I think I may venture to add, from his mother, provided he is disposed to set out upon such a plan of improvement as your good sense is capable of dictating to him; and provided also that you will undertake to accompany and guide him in the pursuit of it.

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Portrait by Peale

To Dr. Boucher

MOUNT VERNON, 21 May, 1772.

Inclination having yielded to Importunity, I am now contrary to all expectation under the hands of Mr. Peale; but in so grave—so sullen a mood—and now and then under the influence of Morpheus, when some critical strokes are making, that I fancy the skill of this Gentleman's Pencil, will be put to it, in describing to the World what manner of man I am. I have no doubt of Mr. Peale's meeting with very good Incouragement in a Tour to Williamsburg; for having mentioned him to some Gentlemen at our Court, they seem desirous of employing him in his way down.

Your excuse for denying us the pleasure of your Company, with Governor Eden & Lady, tho not strictly warranted by Scripture, is nevertheless highly admissable, and I sincerely congratulate you upon the prospect of happiness; as I think there is a fair Field of it opening to your view, from the judiciousness of your choice—Whether Mrs. Washington ever stretches as far as Annapolis or not, we shall certainly take some very early opportunity of making your acquaintance on this occasion.

On Custis's Betrothal

To Benedict Calvert

MOUNT VERNON, 3 April, 1773.

Dear Sir: I am now set down to write to you on a subject of importance, and of no small embarrassment to me.

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My son-in-law and ward, Mr. Custis, has, as I have been informed, paid his addresses to your second daughter, and, having made some progress in her affections, has solicited her in marriage. How far a union of this sort may be agreeable to you, you best can tell; but I should think myself wanting in candor, were I not to confess, that Miss Nellie's amiable qualities are acknowledged on all hands, and that an alliance with your family will be pleasing to his.

This acknowledgment being made, you must permit me to add, Sir, that at this, or in any short time, his youth, inexperience, and unripened education, are, and will be, insuperable obstacles, in my opinion, to the completion of the marriage. As his guardian, I conceive it my indispensable duty to endeavor to carry him through a regular course of education (many branches of which, I am sorry to add, he is totally deficient in), and to guard his youth to a more advanced age before an event, on which his own peace and the happiness of another are to depend, takes place. Not that I have any doubt of the warmth of his affections, nor, I hope I may add, any fears of a change in them; but at present I do not conceive that he is capable of bestowing that attention to the important consequences of the married state, which is necessary to be given by those, who are about to enter into it, and of course I am unwilling he should do it till he is. If the affection, which they have avowed for each other, is fixed upon a solid basis, it will receive no diminution in the course of two or three years, in which time he may prosecute his studies, and thereby render himself more deserving of the lady and useful to society. If, unfortunately, as they are both young, there should be an abatement of affection on either side, or both, it had better precede than follow marriage.

Delivering my sentiments thus freely will not, I hope,

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lead you into a belief, that I am desirous of breaking off the match. To postpone it is all I have in view; for I shall recommend to the young gentleman, with the warmth that become a man of honor, (notwithstanding he did not vouchsafe to consult either his mother or me on the occasion,) to consider himself as much engaged to your daughter, as if the indissoluble knot were tied; and, as the surest means of effecting this, to apply himself closely to his studies, (and in this advice I flatter myself you will join me,) by which he will, in a great measure, avoid those little flirtations with other young ladies, that may, by dividing the attention, contribute not a little to divide the affection.

It may be expected of me, perhaps, to say something of property; but, to descend to particulars, at this time, must seem rather premature. In general, therefore, I shall inform you, that Mr. Custis's estate consists of about fifteen thousand acres of land, a good part of it adjoining the city of Williamsburg, and none of it forty miles from that place; several lots in the said city; between two and three hundred negroes; and about eight or ten thousand pounds upon bond, and in the hands of his merchants. This estate he now holds independent of his mother's dower, which will be an addition to it at her death; and, upon the whole, it is such an estate as you will readily acknowledge ought to entitle him to a handsome portion with a wife. But as I should never require a child of my own to make a sacrifice of himself to interest, so neither do I think it incumbent on me to recommend it as a guardian.

At all times when you, Mrs. Calvert, or the young ladies, can make it convenient to favor us with a visit, we should be happy in seeing you at this place. Mrs. Washington and Miss Custis join me in respectful compliments, and

I am, dear Sir, your most obedient servant.

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A Letter of Sympathy

To Colonel Bassett

MOUNT VERNON, 25 April, 1773.

Dear Sir: The interruption of the post for several weeks, prevented our receiving the melancholy account of your loss until within these few days. That we sympathize in the misfortune, and lament the decree which has deprived you of so dutiful a child, and the world of so promising a young lady, stands in no need, I hope, of argument to prove; but the ways of Providence being inscrutable, and the justice of it not to be scanned by the shallow eye of humanity, nor to be counteracted by the utmost efforts of human power or wisdom, resignation, and as far as the strength of our reason and religion can carry us, a cheerful acquiescence to the Divine Will, is what we are to aim; and I am persuaded that your own good sense will arm you with fortitude to withstand the stroke, great as it is, and enable you to console Mrs. Bassett, whose loss and feelings are much to be pitied.

On the Death of Patsy Custis

To Colonel Bassett

MOUNT VERNON, 20 June, 1773.

Dear Sir: It is an easier matter to conceive, than to describe the distress of this Family; especially that of the unhappy Parent of our Dear Patsy Custis, when I inform you that yesterday removed the Sweet Innocent Girl Entered into a more happy & peaceful abode than any she has met with in the afflicted Path she hitherto has trod.

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She rose from Dinner about four o'clock in better health and spirits than she appeared to have been in for some time; soon after which she was seized with one of her usual Fits, & expired in it, in less than two minutes without uttering a word, a groan, or scarce a sigh.—This sudden, and unexpected blow, I scarce need add has almost reduced my poor Wife to the lowest ebb of Misery; which is encreas'd by the absence of her son, (whom I have just fixed at the College in New York from whence I returned the 8th Inst) and want of the balmy consolation of her Relations; which leads me more than ever to wish she could see them, and that I was Master of Arguments powerful enough to prevail upon Mrs. Dandridge to make this place her entire & absolute home. I should think she lives a lonesome life (Betsy being married) it might suit her well, & be agreeable, both to herself & my Wife, to me most assuredly it would.

In Defence of Resistance by the Colonies

To Bryan Fairfax

MOUNT VERNON, 20 July, 1774.

Dear Sir: That I differ very widely from you, in respect to the mode of obtaining a defeat [repeal] of the acts so much and so justly complained of, I shall not hesitate to acknowledge; and that this difference in opinion may probably proceed from the different constructions we put upon the conduct and intention of the ministry may also be true; but, as I see nothing, on the one hand, to induce a belief that the Parliament would embrace a favorable opportunity of repealing acts, which they go on with great rapidity to pass, and in order to enforce their tyrannical

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system; and, on the other, I observe, or think I observe, that government is pursuing a regular plan at the expense of law and justice to overthrow our constitutional rights and liberties, how can I expect any redress from a measure, which has been ineffectually tried already? For, Sir, what is it we are contending against? Is it against paying the duty of three pence per pound on tea because burthensome? No, it is the right only, we have all along disputed, and to this end we have already petitioned his Majesty in as humble and dutiful manner as subjects could do. Nay, more, we applied to the House of Lords and House of Commons in their different legislative capacities, setting forth, that, as Englishmen, we could not be deprived of this essential and valuable part of a constitution. If, then, as the fact really is, it is against the right of taxation that we now do, and, (as I before said,) all along have contended, why should they suppose an exertion of this power would be less obnoxious now than formerly? And what reasons have we to believe, that they would make a second attempt, while the same sentiments filled the breast of every American, if they did not intend to enforce it if possible?

The conduct of the Boston people could not justify the rigor of their measures, unless there had been a requisition of payment and refusal of it; nor did that measure require an act to deprive the government of Massachusetts Bay of their charter, or to exempt offenders from trial in the place where offences were committed, as there was not, nor could not be, a single instance produced to manifest the necessity of it. Are not all these things self evident proofs of a fixed and uniform plan to tax us? If we want further proofs, do not all the debates in the House of Commons serve to confirm this? And has not General Gage's conduct since his arrival, (in stopping the address of his

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Council, and publishing a proclamation more becoming a Turkish bashaw, than an English governor, declaring it treason to associate in any manner by which the commerce of Great Britain is to be affected,) exhibited an unexampled testimony of the most despotic system of tyranny, that ever was practised in a free government? In short, what further proofs are wanted to satisfy one of the designs of the ministry, than their own acts, which are uniform and plainly tending to the same point, nay, if I mistake not, avowedly to fix the right of taxation? What hope then from petitioning, when they tell us, that now or never is the time to fix the matter? Shall we, after this, whine and cry for relief, when we have already tried it in vain? Or shall we supinely sit and see one province after another fall a prey to despotism? If I was in any doubt, as to the right which the Parliament of Great Britain had to tax us without our consent, I should most heartily coincide with you in opinion, that to petition, and petition only, is the proper method to apply for relief; because we should then be asking a favor, and not claiming a right, which, by the law of nature and our constitution, we are, in my opinion, indubitably entitled to. I should even think it criminal to go further than this, under such an idea; but none such I have. I think the Parliament of Great Britain hath no more right to put their hands into my pocket, without my consent, than I have to put my hands into yours for money; and this being already urged to them in a firm, but decent manner, by all the colonies, what reason is there to expect any thing from their justice?

As to the resolution for addressing the throne, I own to you, Sir, I think the whole might as well have been expunged. I expect nothing from the measure, nor should my voice have accompanied it, if the non-importation

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scheme was intended to be retarded by it; for I am convinced, as much as I am of my existence, that there is no relief but in their distress; and I think, at least I hope, that there is public virtue enough left among us to deny ourselves every thing but the bare necessities of life to accomplish this end. This we have a right to do, and no power upon earth can compel us to do otherwise, till they have first reduced us to the most abject state of slavery that ever was designed for mankind. The stopping our exports would, no doubt, be a shorter cut than the other to effect this purpose; but if we owe money to Great Britain, nothing but the last necessity can justify the non-payment of it; and, therefore, I have great doubts upon this head, and wish to see the other method first tried, which is legal and will facilitate these payments.

I cannot conclude without expressing some concern, that I should differ so widely in sentiment from you, in a matter of such great moment and general import; and should much distrust my own judgment upon the occasion, if my nature did not recoil at the thought of submitting to measures, which I thing subversive of every thing that I ought to hold dear and valuable, and did I not find, at the same time, that the voice of mankind is with me.

I must apologise for sending you so rough a sketch of my thoughts upon your letter. When I looked back, and saw the length of my own, I could not, as I am also a good deal hurried at this time, bear the thoughts of making off a fair copy.

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The Fight for Justice, not for Independence

To Captain Robert MacKenzie

PHILADELPHIA, 9 October, 1774.

Dear Sir: I do not mean by this to insinuate, that an officer is not to discharge his duty, even when chance, not choice, has placed him in a disagreeable situation; but I conceive, when you condemn the conduct of the Massachusetts people, you reason from effects, not causes; otherwise you would not wonder at a people, who are every day receiving fresh proofs of a systematic assertion of an arbitrary power, deeply planned to overturn the laws and constitution of their country, and to violate the most essential and valuable rights of mankind, being irritated, and with difficulty restrained from acts of the greatest violence and intemperance. For my own part, I confess to you candidly, that I view things in a very different point of light from the one in which you seem to consider them; and though you are led to believe by venal men,—for such I must take the liberty of calling those new-fangled counsellors, who fly to and surround you, and all others, who, for honors or pecuniary gratifications, will lend their aid to overturn the constitution, and introduce a system of arbitrary government,—although you are taught, I say, by discoursing with such men, to believe, that the people of Massachusetts are rebellious, setting up for independency, and what not, give me leave, my good friend, to tell you, that you are abused, grossly abused. This I advance with a degree of confidence and boldness, which may claim your belief, having better opportunities of knowing the real sentiments of the people you are among, from the leaders of them, in opposition to the present measures of the admin-

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istration, than you have from those whose business it is, not to disclose truths, but to misrepresent facts in order to justify as much as possible to the world their own conduct. Give me leave to add, and I think I can announce it as a fact, that it is not the wish or interest of that government, or any other upon this continent, separately or collectively, to set up for independence; but this you may at the same time rely on, that none of them will ever submit to the loss of those valuable rights and privileges, which are essential to the happiness of every free state, and without which, life, liberty, and property are rendered totally insecure.

These, Sir, being certain consequences, which must naturally result from the late acts of Parliament relative to America in general, and the government of Massachusetts Bay in particular, is it to be wondered at, I repeat, that men, who wish to avert the impending blow, should attempt to oppose it in its progress, or prepare for their defence, if it cannot be averted? Surely I may be allowed to answer in the negative; and again give me leave to add as my opinion, that more blood will be spilled on this occasion, if the ministry are determined to push matters to extremity, than history has ever yet furnished instances of in the annals of North America, and such a vital wound will be given to the peace of this great country, as time itself cannot cure, or eradicate the remembrance of.

But I have done. I was involuntarily led into a short discussion of this subject by your remarks on the conduct of the Boston people, and your opinion of their wishes to set up for independency. I am well satisfied, that no such thing is desired by any thinking man in all North America; on the contrary, that it is the ardent wish of the warmest advocates for liberty, that peace and tranquillity,

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upon constitutional grounds, may be restored, and the horrors of civil discord prevented.

On the Battle of Concord

To George William Fairfax, England

PHILADELPHIA, 31 May, 1775.

Dear Sir: Before this letter will come to hand, you must undoubtedly have received an account of the engagement in the Massachusetts Bay, between the ministerial troops (for we do not, nor can we yet prevail upon ourselves to call them the King's troops), and the provincials of that government. But as you may not have heard how that affair began, I enclose you the several affidavits, which were taken after the action.

General Gage acknowledges, that the detachment under Lieutenant-Colonel Smith was sent out to destroy private property; or, in other words, to destroy a magazine, which self-preservation obliged the inhabitants to establish. And he also confesses, in effect at least, that his men made a very precipitate retreat from Concord, notwithstanding the reinforcement under Lord Percy; the last of which may serve to convince Lord Sandwich, and others of the same sentiment, that the Americans will fight for their liberties and property, however pusillanimous in his Lordship's eye they may appear in other respects.

From the best accounts I have been able to collect of that affair, indeed from every one, I believe the fact, stripped of all coloring, to be plainly this, that, if the retreat had not been as precipitate as it was, and God knows it could not well have been more so, the ministerial troops must have surrendered, or been totally cut off. For

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they had not arrived in Charlestown (under cover of their ships) half an hour, before a powerful body of men from Marblehead and Salem was at their heels, and must, if they had happened to be up one hour sooner, inevitably have intercepted their retreat to Charlestown. Unhappy it is, though, to reflect, that a brother's sword has been sheathed in a brother's breast, and that the once happy and peaceful plains of America are either to be drenched with blood or inhabited by slaves. Sad alternative! But can a virtuous man hesitate in his choice?

Acceptance of Command

16 June, 1775.

Mr. President: Though I am truly sensible of the high honor done me in this appointment, yet I feel great distress from a consciousness that my abilities and military experience may not be equal to the extensive and important trust. However, as the Congress desire it, I will enter upon the momentous duty and exert every power I possess in the service and for support of the glorious cause. I beg they will accept my most cordial thanks for this distinguished testimony of their approbation. But lest some unlucky event should happen unfavourable to my reputation, I beg it may be remembered by every gentleman in the room, that I this day declare with the utmost sincerity I do not think myself equal to the command I am honored with.

As to pay, Sir, I beg leave to assure the Congress, that as no pecuniary consideration could have tempted me to accept this arduous employment at the expense of my domestic ease and happiness, I do not wish to make any profit from it. I will keep an exact account of my ex-

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penses. Those I doubt not they will discharge, and that is all I desire.

Farewell to Mrs. Washington

To Mrs. Martha Washington

PHILADELPHIA, 18 June, 1775.

My Dearest: I am now set down to write to you on a subject, which fills me with inexpressible concern, and this concern is greatly aggravated and increased, when I reflect upon the uneasiness I know it will give you. It has been determined in Congress, that the whole army raised for the defence of the American cause shall be put under my care, and that it is necessary for me to proceed immediately to Boston to take upon me the command of it.

You may believe me, my dear Patsy, when I assure you, in the most solemn manner, that, so far from seeking this appointment, I have used every endeavor in my power to avoid it, not only from my unwillingness to part with you and the family, but from a consciousness of its being a trust too great for my capacity, and that I should enjoy more real happiness in one month with you at home, than I have the most distant prospect of finding abroad, if my stay were to be seven times seven years. But as it has been a kind of destiny, that has thrown me upon this service, I shall hope that my undertaking it is designed to answer some good purpose. You might, and I suppose did perceive, from the tenor of my letters, that I was apprehensive I could not avoid this appointment, as I did not pretend to intimate when I should return. That was the case. It was utterly out of my power to refuse this appointment, without exposing my character to such cen-

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sure, as would have reflected dishonor upon myself, and given pain to my friends. This, I am sure, could not, and ought not, to be pleasing to you, and must have lessened me considerably in my own esteem. I shall rely, therefore, confidently on that Providence, which has heretofore preserved and been bountiful to me, not doubting but that I shall return safe to you in the fall. I shall feel no pain from the toil or the danger of the campaign; my unhappiness will flow from the uneasiness I know you will feel from being left alone. I therefore beg, that you will summon your whole fortitude, and pass your time as agreeably as possible. Nothing will give me so much sincere satisfaction as to hear this, and to hear it from your own pen. My earnest and ardent desire is, that you would pursue any plan that is most likely to produce content, and a tolerable degree of tranquillity; as it must add greatly to my uneasy feelings to hear, that you are dissatisfied or complaining at what I really could not avoid.

As life is always uncertain, and common prudence dictates to every man the necessity of settling his temporal concerns, while it is in his power, and while the mind is calm and undisturbed, I have, since I came to this place (for I had not time to do it before I left home) got Colonel Pendleton to draft a will for me, by the directions I gave him, which will I now enclose. The provision made for you in case of my death will, I hope, be agreeable.

I shall add nothing more, as I have several letters to write, but to desire that you will remember me to your friends, and to assure you that I am, with the most unfeigned regard, my dear Patsy, your affectionate, &c.

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On Reasons for Accepting Command

To Colonel Bassett

PHILADELPHIA, 19 June, 1775.

Dear Sir: I am now Imbarked on a tempestuous ocean, from whence perhaps no friendly harbor is to be found. I have been called upon by the unanimous voice of the Colonies to the command of the Continental Army. It is an honor I by no means aspired to. It is an honor I wished to avoid, as well as from an unwillingness to quit the peaceful enjoyment of my Family, as from a thorough conviction of my own Incapacity & want of experience in the conduct of so momentous a concern; but the partiality of the Congress, added to some political motives, left me without a choice. May God grant, therefore, that my acceptance of it, may be attended with some good to the common cause, & without injury (from want of knowledge) to my own reputation. I can answer but for three things: a firm belief of the justice of our cause, close attention in the prosecution of it, and the strictest Integrity. If these cannot supply the place of ability & Experience, the cause will suffer, & more than probable my character along with it, as reputation derives its principal support from success; but it will be remembered, I hope, that no desire or insinuation of mine placed me in this situation. I shall not be deprived, therefore, of a comfort in the worst event, if I retain a consciousness of having acted to the best of my judgment.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On Magnanimous Devotion to the Cause

To General Thomas

23 July, 1775.

Sir: The retirement of a General Officer possessing the confidence of his country and the army at so critical a period, appears to me to be big with fatal consequences both to the public cause and his own reputation. While it is unexecuted I think it my duty to use this last effort to prevent it, and your own virtue and good sense must decide upon it. In the usual contests of empire and ambition, the conscience of a soldier has so little share, that he may very properly insist upon his claims of rank, and extend his pretensions even to punctilio;—but in such a cause as this, when the object is neither glory nor extent of territory, but a defence of all that is dear and valuable in private and public life, surely every post ought to be deemed honorable in which a man can serve his country. What matter of triumph will it afford our enemies, that in less than one month, a spirit of discord should show itself in the highest ranks of the army, not to be extinguished by any thing less than a total desertion of duty. How little reason shall we have to boast of American union and patriotism, if at such a time and in such a cause smaller and partial considerations cannot give way to the great and general interest. These remarks not only affect you as a member of the great American body, but as an inhabitant of Massachusetts Bay. Your own Province and the other Colonies have a peculiar and unquestionable claim to your services, and in my opinion you cannot refuse without relinquishing in some degree that character of public virtue and honor which you have

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hitherto supported. If our cause is just, it ought to be supported; but when shall it find support if gentlemen of merit and experience, unable to conquer the prejudices of a competition, withdraw themselves in the hour of danger? I admit, Sir, that your just claims and services have not had due respect,—it is by no means a singular case,—worthy men of all nations and countries have had reasons to make the same complaint, but they did not for this abandon the public cause,—they nobly stifled the dictates of resentment, and made their enemies ashamed of their injustice. And can America afford no such instances of magnanimity? For the sake of your bleeding country,—your devoted Province,—your charter rights,—and by the memories of those brave men who have already fallen in this great cause, I conjure you to banish from your mind every suggestion of anger and disappointment; your country will do ample justice to your merits,—they already do it by the regret and sorrow expressed on this occasion; and the sacrifice you are called to make, will in the judgment of every good man and lover of his country, do you more real honor than the most distinguished victory. You possess the confidence and affection of the troops of this Province particularly;—many of them are not capable of judging the propriety and reasons of your conduct,—should they esteem themselves authorized by your example to leave the service, the consequences may be fatal and irretrievable. There is a reason to fear it from the personal attachment of the officers and men, and the obligations that are supposed to arise from these attachments.

But, sir, the other Colonies have also their claims upon you, not only as a native of America, but an inhabitant of this Province. They have made common cause with it, they have sacrificed their trade, loaded themselves with

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taxes, and are ready to spill their blood, in vindication of the rights of Massachusetts Bay, while all the security and profit of a neutrality have been offered them. But no acts or temptations could seduce them from your side, and leave you a prey to a cruel and perfidious ministry. Sure these reflections must have some weight with a mind as generous and considerate as yours. How will you be able to answer it to your country and to your own conscience, if such a step should lead to a division of the army or the loss and ruin of America be ascribed to measures which your counsels and conduct would have prevented! Before it is too late, I entreat, sir, you would weigh well the greatness of the stake, and upon how much smaller circumstances the fate of empires has depended. Of your own honor and reputation you are the best and only judge; but allow me to say, that a people contending for life and liberty, are seldom disposed to look with a favorable eye upon either men or measures, whose passions, interests or consequences will clash with those inestimable objects. As to myself, Sir, be assured, that I shall with pleasure do all in my power to make your situation both easy and honorable, and that the sentiments I have here expressed flow from a clear opinion that your duty to your country, your posterity, and yourself, most explicitly require your continuance in the service. The order and rank of the commissions is under the consideration of the Continental Congress, whose determination will be received in a few days. It may argue a want of respect to that august body not to wait that decision. But at all events, I shall flatter myself, that these reasons, with others which your own good judgment will suggest, will strengthen your mind against those impressions which are incident to humanity, and laudable to a certain degree, and that the result will be your resolution to assist your

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country and friends in this day of distress. That you may reap the full reward of honor and public esteem which such a conduct deserves, is the sincere wish of, Sir, Yours, &c.—

Further Correspondence Declined

To Lieutenant-General Gage

HEAD-QUARTERS, CAMBRIDGE, 20 August, 1775.

Sir: I addressed you, on the 11th instant, in terms which gave the fairest scope for that humanity and politeness, which were supposed to form a part of your character. I remonstrated with you on the unworthy treatment shown to the officers and citizens of America, whom the fortune of war, chance, or a mistaken confidence had thrown into your hands.

Whether British or American mercy, fortitude, and patience are most pre-eminent; whether our virtuous citizens, whom the hand of tyranny has forced into arms to defend their wives, their children, and their property, or the mercenary instruments of lawless domination, avarice, and revenge, best deserve the appellation of rebels, and the punishment of that cord, which your affected clemency has forborne to inflict; whether the authority under which I act is usurped, or founded upon the genuine principles of liberty, were altogether foreign to the subject. I purposely avoided all political disquisition; nor shall I now avail myself of those advantages, which the sacred cause of my country, of liberty, and of human nature, give me over you; much less shall I stoop to retort and invective; but the intelligence you say you have received from our army requires a reply. I have taken time, Sir, to make a strict inquiry, and find it has not the least foundation in

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truth. Not only your officers and soldiers have been treated with a tenderness due to fellow citizens and brethren, but even those execrable parricides, whose counsels and aid have deluged their country with blood, have been protected from the fury of a justly enraged people. Far from compelling or permitting their assistance, I am embarrassed with the numbers, who crowd to our camp, animated with the purest principles of virtue and love to their country. You advise me to give free operation to truth, to punish misrepresentation and falsehood. If experience stamps value upon counsel, yours must have a weight, which few can claim. You best can tell how far the convulsion, which has brought such ruin on both countries, and shaken the mighty empire of Britain to its foundation, may be traced to these malignant causes.

You affect, Sir, to despise all rank not derived from the same source with your own. I cannot conceive one more honorable, than that which flows from the uncorrupted choice of a brave and free people, the purest source and original fountain of all power. Far from making it a plea for cruelty, a mind of true magnanimity and enlarged ideas would comprehend and respect it.

What may have been the ministerial views, which have precipitated the present crisis, Lexington, Concord, and Charlestown can best declare. May that God, to whom you then appealed, judge between America and you. Under his providence, those who influence the councils of America, and all the other inhabitants of the United Colonies, at the hazard of their lives, are determined to hand down to posterity those just and invaluable privileges, which they received from their ancestors.

I shall now, Sir, close my correspondence with you, perhaps for ever. If your officers, our prisoners, receive a treatment from me different from that, which I wished

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to show them, they and you will remember the occasion of it. I am Sir, your very humble servant.

On Conciliation of the Canadians

To Colonel Benedict Arnold

CAMP AT CAMBRIDGE, 14 September, 1775.

Sir: You are entrusted with a command of the utmost consequence to the interest and liberties of America. Upon your conduct and courage, and that of the officers and soldiers detached on this expedition, not only the success of the present enterprise, and your own honor, but the safety and welfare of the whole continent may depend. I charge you, therefore, and the officers and soldiers under your command, as you value your own safety and honor, and the favor and esteem of your country, that you consider yourselves, as marching not through the country of an enemy, but of our friends and brethren, for such the inhabitants of Canada, and the Indian nations, have approved themselves in this unhappy contest between Great Britain and America; and that you check, by every motive of duty and fear of punishment, every attempt to plunder or insult the inhabitants of Canada. Should any American soldier be so base and infamous as to injure any Canadian or Indian, in his person or property, I do most earnestly enjoin you to bring him in such severe and exemplary punishment, as the enormity of the crime may require. Should it extend to death itself, it will not be disproportioned to its guilt, at such a time and in such a cause.

But I hope and trust, that the brave men, who have voluntarily engaged in this expedition, will be governed by far different views; and that order, discipline, and regu-

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larity of behavior, will be as conspicuous as their valor. I also give it in charge to you to avoid all disrespect of the religion of the country, and its ceremonies. Prudence, policy, and a true Christian spirit will lead us to look with compassion upon their errors without insulting them. While we are contending for our own liberty, we should be very cautious not to violate the rights of conscience in others, ever considering that God alone is the judge of the hearts of men, and to him only in this case they are answerable.

Upon the whole, Sir, I beg you to inculcate upon the officers and soldiers the necessity of preserving the strictest order during the march through Canada; to represent to them the shame, disgrace, and ruin to themselves and their country, if they should by their conduct turn the hearts of our brethren in Canada against us; and, on the other hand, the honors and rewards, which await them if by their prudence and good behavior they conciliate the affections of the Canadians and Indians to the great interests of America, and convert those favorable dispositions they have shown into a lasting union and affection. Thus wishing you, and the officers and soldiers under your command, all honor, safety, and success, I remain, Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

On State Jealousy

To Joseph Reed, Philadelphia

CAMBRIDGE, 8 November, 1775.

Dear Sir: I had like to have forgotten what sits heaviest upon my mind, the new arrangement of officers. Although we have not enough to constitute the new corps, it hath

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employed the general officers and myself ever since Thursday last, and we are nearly as we begun.

Connecticut wants no Massachusetts man in their corps; Massachusetts thinks there is no necessity for a Rhode-Islander to be introduced amongst them; and New Hampshire says, it's very hard, that her valuable and experienced officers (who are willing to serve) should be discarded, because her own regiments, under the new establishment, cannot provide for them. In short, after a four days' labor, I expect that numbers of officers, who have given in their names to serve, must be discarded from Massachusetts, (where the regiments have been numerous, and the number in them small) and Connecticut, completed with a fresh recruit of officers from its own government. This will be departing, not only from the principles of common justice, but from the letter of the resolve agreed on at this place; but, at present, I see no help for it. We are to have another meeting upon the matter this day, when something must be hit upon, as time is slipping off. My compliments to Mrs. Reed and to all inquiring friends. I am, with sincerity and truth, dear Sir, your affectionate humble servant.

P. S. I had just finished my letter when a blundering Lieutenant of the blundering Captain Coit, who had just blundered upon two vessels from Nova Scotia, came in with the account of it, and before I could rescue my letter, without knowing what he did, picked up a candle and sprinkled it with grease; but these are kinds of blunders which one can readily excuse. The vessels contain hay, live-stock, poultry, etc., and are now safely moored in Plymouth harbour.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

Advice as to Discipline of Troops

To Colonel William Woodford

CAMBRIDGE, 10 November, 1775.

Dear Sir: I do not mean to flatter, when I assure you, that I highly approve of your appointment. The inexperience you complain of is a common case, and only to be remedied by practice and close attention. The best general advice I can give, and which I am sure you stand in no need of, is to be strict in your discipline; that is, to require nothing unreasonable of your officers and men, but see that whatever is required be punctually complied with. Reward and punish every man according to his merit, without partiality or prejudice; hear his complaints; if well founded, redress them; if otherwise, discourage them, in order to prevent frivolous ones. Discourage vice in every shape, and impress upon the mind of every man, from the first to the lowest, the importance of the cause, and what it is they are contending for. For ever keep in view the necessity of guarding against surprises. In all your marches, at times, at least, even when there is no possible danger, move with front, rear, and flank guards, that they may be familiarized to the use; and be regular in your encampments, appointing necessary guards for the security of your camp. In short, whether you expect an enemy or not, this should be practised; otherwise your attempts will be confused and awkward, when necessary. Be plain and precise in your orders, and keep copies of them to refer to, that no mistakes may happen. Be easy and condescending in your deportment to your officers, but not too familiar, lest you subject yourself to a want of that respect, which is necessary to support a proper com-

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mand. These, Sir, not because I think you need the advice, but because you have been condescending enough to ask it, I have presumed to give as the great outlines of your conduct.

Charities to be Maintained

To Lund Washington, Mount Vernon

CAMBRIDGE, 26 November, 1775.

"Let the hospitality of the house, with respect to the poor, be kept up. Let no one go hungry away. If any of this kind of people should be in want of corn, supply their necessities, provided it does not encourage them in idleness; and I have no objection to your giving my money in charity, to the amount of forty or fifty pounds a year, when you think it well bestowed. What I mean by having no objection is, that it is my desire that it should be done. You are to consider, that neither myself nor wife is now in the way to do these good offices. In all other respects, I recommend it to you, and have no doubt of your observing the greatest economy and frugality; as I suppose you know, that I do not get a farthing for my services here, more than my expenses. It becomes necessary, therefore, for me to be saving at home."

The above is copied, not only to remind myself of my promises and requests, but others also, if any mischance happens to G. Washington.

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On the Growth of a Mercenary Spirit

To Joseph Reed

CAMBRIDGE, 28 November, 1775.

Dear Sir: What an astonishing thing it is, that those who are employed to sign the Continental bills should not be able, or inclined, to do it as fast as they are wanted. They will prove the destruction of the army, if they are not more attentive and diligent. Such a dearth of public spirit, and want of virtue, such stock-jobbing, and fertility in all low arts to obtain advantages of one kind or another, in this great change of military arrangement, I never saw before, and pray God I may never be witness to again. What will be the ultimate end of these manœuvres is beyond my scan. I tremble at the prospect. We have been till this time enlisting about three thousand five hundred men. To engage these I have been obliged to allow furloughs as far as fifty men a regiment, and the officers I am persuaded indulge as many more. The Connecticut troops will not be prevailed upon to stay longer than their terms [saving those who have enlisted for the next campaign, and mostly on furlough], and such a dirty, mercenary spirit pervades the whole, that I should not be at all surprised at any disaster that may happen. In short, after the last of this month our lines will be so weakened, that the minute-men and militia must be called in for their defence; these, being under no kind of government themselves, will destroy the little subordination I have been laboring to establish, and run me into one evil whilst I am endeavoring to avoid another; but the lesser must be chosen. Could I have foreseen what I have, and am likely to experience, no consideration upon earth should have in-

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duced me to accept this comamnd. A regiment or any subordinate department would have been accompanied with ten times the satisfaction, and perhaps the honor.

It would give me singular pleasure to provide for those two gentlemen, mentioned in your letter; but, believe me, it is beyond the powers of conception to discover the absurdities and partiality of these people, and the trouble and vexation I have had in the new arrangement of officers. After five, I think, different meetings of the general officers, I have in a manner been obliged to give in to the humor and whimsies of the people, or get no army. The officers of one government would not serve in the regiments of another (although there was to be an entire new creation;) a captain must be in this regiment, a subaltern in that company. In short, I can scarce tell at this moment in what manner they are fixed. Some time hence strangers may be brought in; but it could not be done now, except in an instance or two, without putting too much to the hazard.

On the Merit of Benedict Arnold—Patience

To Major-General Schuyler

CAMBRIDGE, 5 December, 1775.

Dear Sir: Your much esteemed favor of the 22d ultimo, covering Colonel Arnold's letter, with a copy of one to General Montgomery and his to you, I received yesterday morning. It gave me the highest satisfaction to hear of Colonel Arnold's being at Point Levi, with his men in great spirits, after their long, fatiguing march, attended with almost insuperable difficulties, and the discouraging circumstance of being left by near one third of the troops,

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that went on the expedition. The merit of this gentleman is certainly great, and I heartily wish, that fortune may distinguish him as one of her favorites. I am convinced, that he will do every thing that prudence and valor shall suggest, to add to the success of our arms and for reducing Quebec to our possession. Should he not be able to accomplish so desirable a work with the forces he has, I flatter myself, that it will be effected when General Montgomery joins him, and our conquest of Canada be complete.

I am exceeding sorry to find you so much plagued and embarrassed by the disregard of discipline, confusion, and want of order among the troops, as to have occasioned you to mention to Congress an inclination to retire. I know that your complaints are too well founded; but I would willingly hope, that nothing will induce you to quit the service, and that, in time, order and subordination will take place of confusion, and command be rendered more agreeable. I have met with difficulties of the same sort, and such as I never expected; but they must be borne with. The cause we are engaged in is so just and righteous, that we must try to rise superior to every obstacle in its support; and, therefore, I beg that you will not think of resigning, unless you have carried your application to Congress too far to recede.

Jealousy of Washington—Prospects for Campaign

To Joseph Reed

CAMBRIDGE, 15 December, 1775.

Dear Sir: Since my last, I have had the pleasure of receiving your favors of the 28th ultimo, and the 2d in-

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stant. I must again express my gratitude for the attention shown Mrs. Washington at Philadelphia. It cannot but be pleasing, although it did, in some measure, impede the progress of her journey on the road. I am much obliged to you for the hints contained in both of the above letters, respecting the jealousies which you say are gone abroad. I have studiously avoided in all letters intended for the public eye, I mean for that of the Congress, every expression that could give pain or uneasiness; and I shall observe the same rule with respect to private letters, further than appears absolutely necessary for the elucidation of facts. I cannot charge myself with incivility, or, what in my opinion is tantamount, ceremonious civility, to the gentlemen of this colony; but if such my conduct appears, I will endeavor at a reformation, as I can assure you, my dear Reed, that I wish to walk in such a line as will give most general satisfaction. You know, that it was my wish at first to invite a certain number of gentlemen of this colony every day to dinner, but unintentionally I believe by anybody we some how or other missed it. If this has given rise to the jealousy, I can only say that I am sorry for it; at the same time I add, that it was rather owing to inattention, or, more properly, too much attention to other matters, which caused me to neglect it. The extracts of letters from this camp, which so frequently appear in the Pennsylvania papers, are not only written without my knowledge, but without my approbation, as I have always thought they must have a disagreeable tendency; but there is no restraining men's tongues, or pens, when charged with a little vanity, as in the accounts given of, or rather by, the riflemen.

The account which you have given of the sentiments of the people respecting my conduct, is extremely flattering. Pray God, that I may continue to deserve them, in the

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perplexed and intricate situation I stand in. Our enlistment goes on slowly. By the returns last Monday, only five thousand nine hundred and seventeen men are engaged for the ensuing campaign; and yet we are told, that we shall get the number wanted, as they are only playing off to see what advantages are to be made, and whether a bounty cannot be extorted from the public at large, or individuals, in case of a draft. Time only can discover this. I doubt the measure exceedingly. The fortunate capture of the store-ship has supplied us with flints, and many other articles we stood in need of; but we still have our wants. We are securing our approach to Letchmore's Point, unable upon any principle whatever to account for their silence, unless it be to lull us into a fatal security to favor some attempt they may have in view about the time of the great change they expect will take place the last of this month. If this be the drift, they deceive themselves, for if possible, it has increased my vigilance, and induced me to fortify all the avenues to our camps, to guard against any approaches upon the ice.

If the Virginians are wise, that arch-traitor to the rights of humanity, Lord Dunmore, should be instantly crushed, if it takes the force of the whole colony to do it; otherwise, like a snow ball, in rolling, his army will get size, some through fear some through promises, and some from inclination joining his standard. But that which renders the measure indispensably necessary is the negroes. For if he gets formidable, numbers will be tempted to join, who will be afraid to do it without.

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An Answer to Criticisms

To Joseph Reed

CAMBRIDGE, 14 January, 1776.

Dear Sir: The hints you have communicated from time to time not only deserve, but do most sincerely and cordially meet with my thanks. You cannot render a more acceptable service, nor in my estimation give a more convincing proof of your friendship, than by a free, open, and undisguised account of every matter relative to myself or conduct. I can bear to hear of imputed or real errors. The man, who wishes to stand well in the opinion of others, must do this; because he is thereby enabled to correct his faults, or remove prejudices which are imbibed against him. For this reason, I shall thank you for giving me the opinions of the world, upon such points as you know me to be interested in; for, as I have but one capital object in view, I could wish to make my conduct coincide with the wishes of mankind, as far as I can consistently; I mean, without departing from that great line of duty, which, though hid under a cloud for some time, from a peculiarity of circumstances, may nevertheless bear a scrutiny. My constant attention to the great and perplexing objects, which continually rise to my view, absorbs all lesser considerations and indeed scarcely allows me in time to reflect, that there is such a body in existence as the General Court of this colony, but when I am reminded of it by a committee; nor can I, upon recollection, discover in what instances (I wish they would be more explicit) I have been inattentive to, or slighted them. They could not, surely, conceive that there was a propriety in unbosoming the secrets of an army to them; that it was

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necessary to ask their opinion of throwing up an intrenchment, forming a battalion, &c., &c. It must, therefore, be what I before hinted to you; and how to remedy it I hardly know, as I am acquainted with few of the members, never go out of my own lines, or see any of them in them.

How to get furnished [with arms] I know not. I have applied to this and the neighboring colonies, but with what success time only can tell. The reflection on my situation, and that of this army, produces many an uneasy hour when all around me are wrapped in sleep. Few people know the predicament we are in, on a thousand accounts; fewer still will believe, if any disaster happens to these lines, from what causes it flows. I have often thought how much happier I should have been, if, instead of accepting of a command under such circumstances, I had taken my musket on my shoulder and entered the ranks, or, if I could have justified the measure to posterity and my own conscience, had retired to the back country, and lived in a wigwam. If I shall be able to rise superior to these and many other difficulties, which might be enumerated, I shall most religiously believe, that the finger of Providence is in it, to blind the eyes of our enemies; for surely if we get well through this month, it must be for want of their knowing the disadvantages we labor under.

Could I have foreseen the difficulties, which have come upon us; could I have known, that such a backwardness would have been discovered in the old soldiers to the service, all the generals upon earth should not have convinced me of the propriety of delaying an attack upon Boston till this time. When it can now be attempted, I will not undertake to say; but thus much I will answer for, that no opportunity can present itself earlier than my wishes.

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But as this letter discloses some interesting truths, I shall be somewhat uneasy until I hear it gets to your hands, although the conveyance is thought safe.

On the Disadvantages of Militia

To the President of Congress

CAMBRIDGE, 9 February, 1776.

Sir: The purport of this letter will be directed to a single object. Through you I mean to lay it before Congress, and, at the same time that I beg their serious attention to the subject, to ask pardon for intruding an opinion, not only unasked, but, in some measure, repugnant to their resolves.

The disadvantages attending the limited enlistment of troops are too apparent to those, who are eyewitnesses of them, to render any animadversions necessary; but to gentlemen at a distance, whose attention is engrossed by a thousand important objects, the case may be otherwise.

That this cause precipitated the fate of the brave and much-to-be-lamented General Montgomery, and brought on the defeat, which followed thereupon, I have not the most distant doubt of; for, had he not been apprehensive of the troops leaving him at so important crisis, but continued the blockade of Quebec, a capitulation, from the best accounts I have been able to collect, must inevitably have followed. And that we were not obliged at one time to dispute these lines, under disadvantageous circumstances, (proceeding from the same cause, to wit, the troops disbanding of themselves before the militia could be got in,) is to me a matter of wonder and astonishment, and proves, that General Howe was either unacquainted with our situ-

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ation, or restrained by his instructions from putting any thing to hazard, till his reinforcements should arrive.

The instance of General Montgomery—I mention it, because it is a striking one,—for a number of others might be adduced proves, that, instead of having men to take advantage of circumstances, you are in a manner compelled, right or wrong, to make circumstances yield to a secondary consideration. Since the 1st of December, I have been devising every means in my power to secure these encampments; and though I am sensible that we never have, since that period, been able to act on the offensive, and at times not in a condition to defend, yet the cost of marching home one set of men, and bringing in another, the havoc and waste occasioned by the first, the repairs necessary for the second, with a thousand incidental charges and inconveniences, which have arisen, and which it is scarce possible either to recollect or describe, amount to near as much, as the keeping up a respectable body of troops the whole time, ready for any emergency, would have done.

To this may be added, that you never can have a well disciplined army.

To bring men [to be] well acquainted with the duties of a soldier, requires time. To bring them under proper discipline and subordination, not only requires time, but is work of great difficulty, and, in this army, where there is so little distinction between the officers and soldiers, requires an uncommon degree of attention. To expect, then, the same service from raw and undisciplined recruits, as from veteran soldiers, is to expect what never did and perhaps never will happen. Men, who are familiarized to danger, meet it without shrinking; whereas troops unused to service often apprehend danger where no danger is. Three things prompt men to a regular discharge of their

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duty in time of action; natural bravery, hope of reward, and fear of punishment. The two first are common to the untutored and the disciplined soldier; but the last most obviously distinguishes the one from the other. A coward, when taught to believe, that, if he breaks his ranks and abandons his colors, will be punished with death by his own party, will take his chance against the enemy; but a man, who thinks little of the one, and is fearful of the other, acts from present feelings, regardless of consequences.

Again, men of day's standing will not look forward; and from experience we find, that, as the time approaches for their discharge, they grow careless of their arms, ammunition, camp utensils, &c. Nay, even the barracks themselves have felt uncommon marks of wanton depredation, and lay us under fresh trouble and additional expense in providing for every fresh set, when we find it next to impossible to procure such articles, as are absolutely necessary in the first instance. To this may be added the seasoning, which new recruits must have to a camp, and the loss consequent thereupon. But this is not all. Men engaged for a short, limited time only, have the officers too much in their power; for, to obtain a degree of popularity in order to induce a second enlistment, a kind of familiarity takes place, which brings on a relaxation of discipline, unlicensed furloughs, and other indulgences incompatible with order and good government; by which means the latter part of the time, for which the soldier was engaged, is spent in undoing what you were aiming to inculcate in the first.

To go into an enumeration of all the evils we have experienced, in this late great change of the army, and the expenses incidental to it, to say nothing of the hazard we have run, and must run, between the discharging of

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one army of enlistment of another, (unless an enormous expense of militia is incurred,) would greatly exceed the bounds of a letter. What I have already taken the liberty of saying will serve to convey a general idea of the matter; and therefore I shall, with all due deference, take the freedom to give it as my opinion, that, if the Congress have any reason to believe, that there will be occasion for troops another year, and consequently for another enlistment, they would save money, and have infinitely better troops, if they were, even at a bounty of twenty, thirty, or more dollars, to engage the men already enlisted (till January next,) and such others as may be wanted to complete the enlistment, for and during the war. I will not undertake to say, that the men can be had upon these terms; but I am satisfied, that it will never do to let the matter alone, as it was last year, till the time of service was near expiring. The hazard is too great, in the first place; in the next, the trouble and perplexity of disbanding one army and raising another at the same instant, and in such a critical situation as the last was, are scarcely in the power of words to describe, and such as no man, who has experienced them once, will ever undergo again.

If Congress should differ from me in sentiment upon this point, I have only to beg that they will do me the justice to believe, that I have nothing more in view, than what to me appears necessary to advance the public weal, although in the first instance it will be attended with a capital expense; and that I have the honor to be, &c.

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On the Difficulties of His Position

To Joseph Reed

CAMBRIDGE, 10 February, 1776.

Dear Sir: If you conceive, that I took any thing wrong, or amiss, that was conveyed in any of your former letters, you are really mistaken. I only meant to convince you, that nothing would give more real satisfaction, than to know the sentiments, which are entertained of me by the public, whether they be favorable or otherwise; And I urged as a reason, that the man, who wished to steer clear of shelves and rocks, must know where they lay. I know—but to declare it, unless to a friend, may be an argument of vanity—the integrity of my own heart. I know the unhappy predicament I stand in; I know that much is expected of me; I know, that without men, without arms, without ammunition, without any thing fit for the accommodation of a soldier, little is to be done; and, which is mortifying, I know, that I cannot stand justified to the world without exposing my own weakness, and injuring the cause, by declaring my wants, which I am determined not to do, further than unavoidable necessity brings every man acquainted with them.

If, under these disadvantages, I am able to keep above water, (as it were) in the esteem of mankind, I shall feel myself happy; but if, from the unknown peculiarity of my circumstances, I suffer in the opinion of the world, I shall not think you take the freedom of a friend, if you conceal the reflections that may be cast upon my conduct. My own situation feels so irksome to me at times, that, if I did not consult the public good, more than my own tranquillity, I should long ere this have put every thing to

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the cast of a Dye. So far from my having an army of twenty thousand men well armed, I have been here with less than half of it, including sick, furloughed, and on command, and those neither armed nor clothed, as they should be. In short, my situation has been such, that I have been obliged to use art to conceal it from my own officers.

With respect to myself, I have never entertained an idea of an accommodation, since I heard of the measures, which were adopted in consequence of the Bunker's Hill fight. The King's speech has confirmed the sentiments I entertained upon the news of that affair; and, if every man was of my mind, the ministers of Great Britain should know, in a few words, upon what issue the cause should be put. I would not be deceived by artful declarations, nor specious pretences; nor would I be amused by unmeaning propositions; but in open, undisguised, and manly terms proclaim our wrongs, and our resolution to be redressed. I would tell them, that we had borne much, that we had long and ardently sought for reconciliation upon honorable terms, that it had been denied us, that all our attempts after peace had proved abortive, and had been grossly misrepresented, that we had done everything which could be expected from the best of subjects, that the spirit of freedom beat too high in us to submit to slavery, and that, if nothing else could satisfy a tyrant and his diabolical ministry, we are determined to shake off all connexions with a state so unjust and unnatural. This I would tell them, not under covert, but in words as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness.

I recollect nothing else worth giving you the trouble of, unless you can be amused by reading a letter and poem addressed to me by Mrs. or Miss Phillis Wheatley. In searching over a parcel of papers the other day, in

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order to destroy such as were useless, I brought it to light again. At first, with a view of doing justice to her great poetical genius, I had a great mind to publish the poem; but not knowing whether it might not be considered rather as a mark of my own vanity, than as a compliment to her, I laid it aside, till I came across it again in the manner just mentioned. I congratulate you upon your election, although I consider it as the *coup de grace* to my expectation of ever seeing you a resident in this camp again. I have only to regret the want of you, if that should be the case; and I shall do it the more feelingly, as I have experienced the good effects of your aid. I am, with Mrs. Washington's compliments to Mrs. Reed, and my best respects, added, dear Sir, your most obedient and affectionate servant.

All Must Unite

To John Augustine Washington

CAMBRIDGE, 31 March, 1776.

Dear Brother: The want of arms and powder is not peculiar to Virginia. This country, of which doubtless you have heard large and flattering accounts, is more deficient in both than you can conceive. I have been here months together, with (what will scarcely be believed) not thirty rounds of musket cartridges to a man; and have been obliged to submit to all the insults of the enemy's cannon for want of powder, keeping what little we had for pistol distance. Another thing has been done, which, added to the above, will put it in the power of this army to say, what perhaps no other with justice ever could say. We have maintained our ground against the enemy, under this want of powder, and we have disbanded one army,

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and recruited another, within musket-shot of two and twenty regiments, the flower of the British army, whilst our force has been but little if any superior to theirs; and, at last, have beaten them into a shameful and precipitate retreat out of a place the strongest by nature on this continent, and strengthened and fortified at an enormous expense.

I believe I may with great truth affirm, that no man perhaps since the first institution of armies ever commanded one under more difficult circumstances, than I have done. To enumerate the particulars would fill a volume. Many of my difficulties and distresses were of so peculiar a cast, that, in order to conceal them from the enemy, I was obliged to conceal them from my friends, and indeed from my own army, thereby subjecting my conduct to interpretations unfavorable to my character, especially by those at a distance, who could not in the smallest degree be acquainted with the springs that governed it. I am happy, however, to find, and to hear from different quarters, that my reputation stands fair, that my conduct hitherto has given universal satisfaction. The addresses, which I have received, and which I suppose will be published, from the General Court of this colony, and from the selectmen of Boston upon the evacuation of the town, and my approaching departure from the colony, exhibit a pleasing testimony of their approbation of my conduct, and of their personal regard, which I have found in various other instances, and which, in retirement, will afford many comfortable reflections.

The share you have taken in the public disputes is commendable and praiseworthy. It is a duty we owe our country; a claim which posterity has upon us. It is not sufficient for a man to be a passive friend and well-wisher to the cause. This, and every other cause of such a nature,

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must inevitably perish under such an opposition. Every person should be active in some department or other, without paying too much attention to private interest. It is a great stake we are playing for, and sure we are of winning, if the cards are well managed. Inactivity in some, disaffection in others, and timidity in many, may hurt the cause. Nothing else can; for unanimity will carry us through triumphantly, in spite of every exertion of Great Britain, if we are linked together in one indissoluble bond. This the leaders know, and they are practising every stratagem to divide us, and unite their own people. Upon this principle it is, that the restraining bill is passed, and commissioners are coming over. The device, to be sure, is shallow, the covering thin, but they will hold out to their own people, that the acts complained of are repealed, and commissioners sent to each colony to treat with us, and that we will attend to neither of them. This, upon weak minds among us, will have its effect. They wish for reconciliation; or, in other words, they wish for peace without attending to the conditions.

On Public Opinion—Loyalists

To Joseph Reed

CAMBRIDGE, 1 April, 1776.

Dear Sir: The accounts brought by Mr. Temple, of the favorable disposition in the Ministry to accommodate matters, does not correspond with their speeches in Parliament;—how then does he account for their inconsistency? If the commissioners do not come over with full and ample powers to treat with Congress, I sincerely wish they may never put their feet on American ground, as it must be

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self-evident, (in the other case,) that they come over with insidious intentions; to distract, divide, and create as much confusion as possible; how then can any man, let his passion for reconciliation be never so strong, be so blinded and misled, as to embrace a measure evidently designed for his destruction? No man does, no man can, wish the restoration of peace more fervently than I do, but I hope, whenever made, it will be upon such terms as will reflect honor upon the councils and wisdom of America. With you, I think a change in the American representation necessary; frequent appeals to the people can be attended with no bad, but may have very salutary effects. My countrymen I know, from their form of government, and steady attachment heretofore to royalty, will come reluctantly into the idea of independence, but time and persecution bring many wonderful things to pass; and by private letters, which I have lately received from Virginia, I find "Common Sense" is working a powerful change there in the minds of many men.

The four thousand men destined for Boston on the 5th, if the ministerialists had attempted our works on Dorchester, or the lines at Roxbury, were to have been headed by Old Put. But he would have had pretty easy work of it, as his motions were to have been regulated by signals, and those signals from appearances. He was not to have made the attempt, unless the town had been drained, or very considerably weakened of its force.

I believe I mentioned in my last to you, that all those who took upon themselves the style and title (in Boston) of government's men, have shipped themselves off in the same hurry, but under greater disadvantages than the king's (I think it idle to keep up the distinction of ministerial) troops have done, being obliged in a manner to man their own vessels; seamen not being to be had for the king's

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transports, and submit to all the hardships that can be conceived. One or two of them have committed what it would have been happy for mankind if more of them had done, long ago; the act of suicide. By all accounts a more miserable set of beings does not exist than these; taught to believe that the power of Great Britain was almost omnipotent, and if it was not, that foreign aid was at hand, they were higher and more insulting in their opposition than the regulars themselves. When the order issued therefore for embarking the troops in Boston, no electric shock, no sudden flash of lightning, in a word, not even the last trump, could have struck them with greater consternation; they were at their wit's end and conscious of their black ingratitude, chose to commit themselves in the manner before described, to the mercy of the winds and waves in a tempestuous season, rather than meet their offended countrymen, and with this declaration I am told they have done it, that if they could have thought that the most abject submission would have procured peace for them, they would have humbled themselves in the dust, and kissed the rod that should be held out for chastisement.

Unhappy wretches! Deluded mortals! Would it not be good policy to grant a generous amnesty, and conquer these people by a generous forgiveness?

In Behalf of the Aids-de-Camp

To the President of Congress

NEW YORK, 23 April, 1776.

Sir: In a letter, which I had the honor to receive from Congress some considerable time ago, they were pleased to ask what rank aids-de-camp bore in the army; from

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whence I concluded, that they had adverted to the extraordinary trouble and confinement of those gentlemen, with a view to make them an adequate allowance. But nothing being since done or said of the matter, I take the liberty, unsolicited by, and unknown to my aids-de-camp, to inform your honorable body, that their pay is not by any means equal to their trouble and confinement.

No person wishes more to save money to the public, than I do; and no person has aimed more at it. But there are some cases in which parsimony may be ill-placed; and this I take to be one. Aids-de-camp are persons in whom entire confidence must be placed; it requires men of abilities to execute the duties with propriety and despatch, where there is such a multiplicity of business, as must attend the Commander-in-chief of such an army as ours; and persuaded I am, that nothing but the zeal of those gentlemen, who live with me and act in this capacity, for the great American cause, and personal attachment to me, have induced them to undergo the trouble and confinement they have experienced, since they have become members of my family.

I give in to no kind of amusements myself; and consequently those about me can have none, but are confined from morning till eve, hearing and answering the applications and letters of one and another, which will now, I expect, receive a considerable addition, as the business of the northern and eastern departments, (if I continue here,) must, I suppose, pass through my hands. If these gentlemen had the same relaxation from duty as other officers have in their common routine, there would not be so much in it. But, to have the mind always upon the stretch, scarce ever unbent, and no hours for recreation, makes a material odds. Knowing this, and at the same time how inadequate the pay is, I can scarce find inclination to im-

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pose the necessary duties of their office upon them. To what I have here said, this further remark may be made, and it is a matter of no small concernment to me, and, in its consequences, to the public, and that is, that, while the duty is hard and the pay small, it is not to be wondered at, if there should be found a promptness in them to seek preferment, or in me to do justice to them by facilitating their views; by which means I must lose their aid, when they have it most in their power to assist me. Influenced by these motives, I have taken the liberty of laying the matter fully and with all due deference before your honorable body, not doubting its meeting with a patient hearing.

On the Need of a Stronger Union

To John Augustine Washington

PHILADELPHIA, 31 May, 1776.

Dear Brother: I am very glad to find that the Virginia Convention have passed so noble a vote, and with so much unanimity. Things have come to that pass now, as to convince us, that we have nothing more to expect from the justice of Great Britain; also, that she is capable of the most delusive arts; for I am satisfied, that no commissioners ever were designed, except Hessians and other foreigners; and that the idea was only to deceive and throw us off our guard. The first has been too effectually accomplished, as many members of Congress, in short, the representation of whole provinces, are still feeding themselves upon the dainty food of reconciliation; and, though they will not allow, that the expectation of it has any influence upon their judgment, (with respect to their preparations

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for defence,) it is but too obvious, that it has an operation upon every part of their conduct, and is a clog to their proceedings. It is not in the nature of things to be otherwise; for no man, that entertains a hope of seeing this dispute speedily and equitably adjusted by commissioners, will go to the same expense and run the same hazards to prepare for the worst event, as he who believes that he must conquer, or submit to unconditional terms, and its concomitants, such as confiscation, hanging, &c., &c.

To form a new government requires infinite care and unbounded attention; for if the foundation is badly laid, the superstructure must be bad. Too much time, therefore, cannot be bestowed in weighing and digesting matters well. We have, no doubt, some good parts in our present constitution; many bad ones we know we have. Wherefore, no time can be misspent that is employed in separating the wheat from the tares. My fear is, that you will all get tired and homesick; the consequence of which will be, that you will patch up some kind of a constitution as defective as the present. This should be avoided. Every man should consider, that he is lending his aid to frame a constitution, which is to render millions happy or miserable, and that a matter of such moment cannot be the work of a day.

We expect a very bloody summer of it at New York and Canada, as it is there I expect the grand efforts of the enemy will be aimed; and I am sorry to say, that we are not either in men or arms prepared for it. However, it is to be hoped, that, if our cause is just, as I do most religiously believe it to be, the same Providence, which has in many instances appeared for us, will still go on to afford its aid.

Mrs. Washington is now under inoculation in this city; and will, I expect, have the smallpox favorably. This is

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the thirteenth day, and she has very few pustules. She would have written to my sister, but thought it prudent not to do so, notwithstanding there could be but little danger in conveying the infection in this manner. She joins me in love to you, her, and all the little ones. I am, with every sentiment of regard, dear Sir, your most affectionate brother.

On the Qualifications of General Sullivan

To the President of Congress

NEW YORK, 17 June, 1776.

Sir: The enclosed came to my hands as a private letter from General Sullivan. As a private letter I lay it before Congress. The tendency [for it requires no explanation] will account for the contrast between it and the letter of General Arnold. That the former is aiming at the command in Canada is obvious. Whether he merits it or not, is a matter to be considered; and that it may be considered with propriety, I think it my duty to observe, as of my own knowledge, that he is active, spirited, and zealously attached to the cause. That he does not want abilities, many members of Congress as well as myself, can testify; but he has his wants, and he has his foibles. The latter are manifested in a little tincture of vanity, and in an over desire of being popular, which now and then leads him into embarrassments. His wants are common to us all—the want of experience to move upon a large scale; for the limited and contracted knowledge, which any of us have in military matters, stands in very little stead, and is greatly overbalanced by sound judgment, and some knowledge of men and books, especially when accompanied by an enter-

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prising genius, which, I must do General Sullivan the justice to say, I think he possesses.

On the Declaration of Independence

To the President of Congress

NEW YORK, 10 July, 1776.

Sir: I perceive that Congress have been employed in deliberating on measures of the most interesting nature. It is certain, that it is not with us to determine in many instances what consequences will flow from our counsels; but yet it behoves us to adopt such, as, under the smiles of a gracious and all-kind Providence, will be most likely to promote our happiness. I trust the late decisive part they have taken is calculated for that end, and will secure us that freedom and those privileges, which have been and are refused us, contrary to the voice of nature and the British constitution. Agreeably to the request of Congress, I caused the *Declaration* to be proclaimed before all the army under my immediate command; and have the pleasure to inform them, that the measure seemed to have their most hearty assent; the expressions and behavior, both of officers and men, testifying their warmest approbation of it. I have transmitted a copy to General Ward at Boston, requesting him to have it proclaimed to the Continental troops in that department.

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On the Auditing of Accounts

To the President of Congress

NEW YORK, 11 July, 1776.

Sir: As I am truly sensible the time of Congress is much taken up with a variety of important matters, it is with unwillingness and pain I ever repeat a request after having once made it, or take the liberty of enforcing any opinion of mine after it is once given; but, as the establishing of some office for auditing accounts is a matter of exceeding importance to the public interest, I would beg leave once more to call the attention of Congress to an appointment competent to the purposes. Two motives induce me to urge the matter: first, a conviction of the utility of the measure; secondly, that I may stand exculpated if hereafter it should appear, that money has been improperly expended, and necessities for the army obtained upon unreasonable terms.

For me, whose time is employed from the hour of my rising till I retire to bed again, to go into an examination of the accounts of such an army as this, with any degree of precision and exactness, without neglecting other matters of equal importance, is utterly impracticable. All that I have been able to do and that, in fact, was doing nothing was, when the commissary, and quartermaster, and director-general of the hospital (for it is to these the great advances are made) applied for warrants, to make them at times produce a general account of their expenditures. But this answers no valuable purpose. It is the minutiae that must be gone into, the propriety of each charge examined, the vouchers looked into; and, with respect to the commissary-general, his victualling returns and expendi-

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tures of provisions should be compared with his purchases; otherwise a person in this department, if he was inclined to be knavish, might purchase large quantities with the public money, and sell one half of it again for private emolument, and yet his accounts upon paper would appear fair, and be supported with vouchers for every charge.

I do not urge this matter from a suspicion of any unfair practices in either of the departments before mentioned; and sorry should I be if this construction was put upon it, having a high opinion of the honor and integrity of these gentlemen. But there should nevertheless be some control, as well upon their discretion as honesty; to which may be added, that accounts become perplexed and confused by long standing, and the errors therein not so discoverable as if they underwent an early revision and examination. I am well apprized, that a treasury office of accounts has been resolved upon, and an auditor-general for settling all public accounts; but, with all deference and submission to the opinion of Congress, these institutions are not calculated to prevent the inconveniences I have mentioned; nor can they be competent to the purposes, circumstanced as they are.

On His Proper Title

To the President of Congress

NEW YORK, 14 July, 1776.

Sir: About three o'clock this afternoon I was informed, that a flag from Lord Howe was coming up, and waited with two of our whale-boats until directions should be given. I immediately convened such of the general officers as were not upon other duty, who agreed in opinion, that I

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ought not to receive any letter directed to me as a private gentleman; but if otherwise, and the officer desired to come up to deliver the letter himself, as was suggested, he should come under a safe-conduct. Upon this, I directed Colonel Reed to go down and manage the affair under the above general instruction. On his return he informed me, after the common civilities, the officer acquainted him, that he had a letter from Lord Howe to Mr. Washington, which he showed under a superscription, "*To George Washington, Esq.*" Colonel Reed replied, there was no such person in the army, and that a letter intended for the General could not be received under such a direction. The officer expressed great concern, said it was a letter rather of a civil than military nature, that Lord Howe regretted he had not arrived sooner, that he (Lord Howe) had great powers. The anxiety to have the letter received was very evident, though the officer disclaimed all knowledge of its contents. However, Colonel Reed's instructions being positive, they parted. After they had got some distance, the officer with the flag again put about, and asked under what direction Mr. Washington chose to be addressed; to which Colonel Reed answered, his station was well known, and that certainly they could be at no loss how to direct to him. The officer said they knew it, and lamented it; and again repeated his wish, that the letter could be received. Colonel Reed told him a proper direction would obviate all difficulties, and that this was no new matter, the subject having been fully discussed in the course of the last year, of which Lord Howe could not be ignorant; upon which they parted.

I would not upon any occasion sacrifice essentials to punctilio; but in this instance, the opinion of others concurring with my own, I deemed it a duty to my country and my appointment, to insist upon that respect, which,

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in any other than a public view, I would willingly have waived. Nor do I doubt, but, from the supposed nature of the message, and the anxiety expressed, they will either repeat their flag, or fall upon some mode to communicate the import and consequence of it.

On Protection for Women and Children

To the New York Convention

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEW YORK, 17 August, 1776.

Gentlemen: When I consider, that the city of New York will in all human probability very soon be the scene of a bloody conflict, I cannot but view the great numbers of women, children, and infirm persons remaining in it, with the most melancholy concern. When the men-of-war passed up the river, the shrieks and cries of these poor creatures running every way with their children, were truly distressing, and I fear they will have an unhappy effect on the ears and minds of our young and inexperienced soldiery. Can no method be devised for their removal? Many doubtless are of ability to remove themselves, but there are others in a different situation. Some provision for them afterwards would also be a necessary consideration. It would relieve me from great anxiety, if your honorable body would immediately deliberate upon it, and form and execute some plan for their removal and relief; in which I will coöperate and assist to the utmost of my power. In the mean time, I have thought it proper to recommend to persons, of the above description, to convey themselves without delay to some place of safety, with their most valuable effects.

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On the Weakness of Militia

To the President of Congress

NEW YORK, 2 September, 1776.

Sir: As my intelligence of late has been rather unfavorable, and would be received with anxiety and concern, peculiarly happy should I esteem myself, were it in my power at this time to transmit such information to Congress, as would be more pleasing and agreeable to their wishes; but, unfortunately for me, unfortunately for them, it is not. Our situation is truly distressing. The check our detachment sustained on the 27th ultimo has dispirited too great a proportion of our troops, and filled their minds with apprehension and despair. The militia, instead of calling forth their utmost efforts to a brave and manly opposition in order to repair our losses, are dismayed, intractable, and impatient to return. Great numbers of them have gone off; in some instances, almost by whole regiments, by half ones, and by companies at a time. This circumstance, of itself, independent of others, when fronted by a well-appointed enemy superior in number to our whole collected force, would be sufficiently disagreeable; but, when their example has infected another part of the army, when their want of discipline, and refusal of almost every kind of restraint and government, have produced a like conduct but too common to the whole, and an entire disregard of that order and subordination necessary to the well-doing of an army, and which has been inculcated before, as well as the nature of our military establishment would admit of,—our condition is still more alarming; and, with the deepest concern, I am obliged to confess my want of confidence in the generality of the troops.

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All these circumstances fully confirm the opinion I ever entertained, and which I more than once in my letters took the liberty of mentioning to Congress, that no dependence could be put in a militia, or other troops than those enlisted and embodied for a longer period than our regulations heretofore have prescribed. I am persuaded, and as fully convinced as I am of any one fact that has happened, that our liberties must of necessity be greatly hazarded, if not entirely lost, if their defence is left to any but a permanent standing army; I mean, one to exist during the war. Nor would the expense, incident to the support of such a body of troops, as would be competent to almost every exigency, far exceed that, which is daily incurred by calling in succor, and new enlistments, which, when effected, are not attended with any good consequences. Men, who have been free and subject to no control, cannot be reduced to order in an instant; and the privileges and exemptions, they claim and will have, influence the conduct of others; and the aid derived from them is nearly counterbalanced by the disorder, irregularity, and confusion they occasion.

On the Plan of Campaign

To the President of Congress

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEW YORK, 8 September, 1776.

Sir: Since I had the honor of addressing you on the 6th Inst. I have called a council of the general officers, in order to take a full and comprehensive view of our situation, and thereupon form such a plan of future defences as may be immediately pursued, and subject to no other alteration, than a change of operations on the enemy's

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side may occasion. Before the landing of the enemy in Long Island, the point of attack could not be known, nor any satisfactory judgment formed of their intentions. It might be on Long Island, on Bergen, or directly on the city. This made it necessary to be prepared for each, and has occasioned an expense of labor, which now seems useless, and is regretted by those, who form a judgment from after-knowledge. But I trust, that men of discernment will think differently, and see that by such works and preparations we have not only delayed the operations of the campaign, till it is too late to effect any capital incursion into the country, but have drawn the enemy's forces to one point, and obliged them to decline their plan, so as to enable us to form our defence on some certainty.

It is now extremely obvious from all intelligence from their movements, and every other circumstance, that, having landed their whole army on Long Island, except about four thousand on Staten Island, they mean to enclose us on the island of New York, by taking post in our rear while the shipping effectually protects the front; and thus, either by cutting off our communication with the country, oblige us to fight them on their own terms, or surrender at discretion, or by a brilliant stroke endeavor to cut this army in pieces, and secure the collection of arms and stores, which they well know we shall not be able soon to replace. Having therefore their system unfolded to us, it became an important consideration how it could be most successfully opposed. On every side there is a choice of difficulties; and every measure on our part, however painful the reflection is from experience, is to be formed with some apprehension, that all our troops will not do their duty. In deliberating on this great question, it was impossible to forget, that history, our own experience, the advice of our ablest friends in Europe, the fears of the enemy, and

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even the declarations of Congress, demonstrate, that on our side the war should be defensive (it has ever been called a war of posts), that we should on all occasions avoid a general action, nor put any thing to risk, unless compelled by a necessity into which we ought never to be drawn.

The arguments on which such a system was founded were deemed to be unanswerable; and experience has given her sanction. With these views, and being fully persuaded, that it would be presumption to draw out our young troops into open ground against their superiors both in number and discipline, I have never spared the spade and pickaxe. I confess I have not found that readiness to defend even strong posts at all hazards, which is necessary to derive the greatest benefits from them. The honor of making a brave defence does not seem to be a sufficient stimulus, when success is very doubtful, and the falling into the enemy's hands probable; but, I doubt not, this will be gradually attained. We are now in a strong post, but not an impregnable one, nay, acknowledged by every man of judgement to be untenable, unless the enemy will make the attack upon lines, when they can avoid it, and their movements indicate that they mean to do so.

On the Necessity of a Regular Army

To the President of Congress

COLO. MORRIS'S, ON THE HEIGHTS OF HAERLEM,
24 September, 1776.

Sir: From the hours allotted to sleep, I will borrow a few moments to convey my thoughts on sundry important matters to Congress. I shall offer them with the sincerity,

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which ought to characterize a man of candor, and with the freedom, which may be used in giving useful information without incurring the imputation of presumption.

We are now, as it were, upon the eve of another dissolution of our army. The remembrance of the difficulties, which happened upon that occasion last year, and the consequences, which might have followed the change if proper advantages had been taken by the enemy, added to a knowledge of the present temper and situation of the troops, reflect but a very gloomy prospect in the appearances of things now, and satisfy me beyond the possibility of doubt, that, unless some speedy and effectual measures are adopted by Congress, our cause will be lost. It is in vain to expect, that any more than a trifling part of this army will again engage in the service on the encouragement offered by Congress. When men find that their townsmen and companions are receiving twenty, thirty, and more dollars for a few months' service, which is truly the case, it cannot be expected, without using compulsion; and to force them into the service would answer no valuable purpose. When men are irritated, and their passions inflamed, they fly hastily and cheerfully to arms; but, after the first emotions are over, to expect among such people as compose the bulk of an army, that they are influenced by any other principles than those of interest, is to look for what never did, and I fear never will happen; the Congress will deceive themselves, therefore, if they expect it. A soldier, reasoned with upon the goodness of the cause he is engaged in, and the inestimable rights he is contending for, hears you with patience, and acknowledges the truth of your observations, but adds that it is of no more importance to him than to others. The officer makes you the same reply, with this further remark, that his pay will not support him, and he can not ruin himself and family to serve his coun-

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try, when every member of the community is equally interested, and benefitted by his labors. The few, therefore, who act upon the principles of disinterestedness, comparatively speaking, are no more than a drop in the ocean.

It becomes evident to me then, that, as this contest is not likely to be the work of a day, as the war must be carried on systematically, and to do it you must have good officers, there are in my judgment no other possible means to obtain them but by establishing your army on a permanent footing, and giving your officers good pay. This will induce gentlemen and men of character to engage; and, till the bulk of your officers is composed of such persons as are actuated by principles of honor and a spirit of enterprise, you have little to expect from them. They ought to have such allowances, as will enable them to live like and support the character of gentlemen, and not be driven by a scanty pittance to the low and dirty arts, which many of them practise, to filch from the public more than the difference of pay would amount to, upon an ample allowance. Besides, something is due to the man, who puts his life in your hands, hazards his health, and forsakes the sweets of domestic enjoyment. Why a captain in the Continental service should receive no more than five shillings currency per day for performing the same duties, that an officer of the same rank in the British service receives ten shillings for, I never could conceive; especially when the latter is provided with every necessary he requires upon the best terms, and the former can scarce procure them at any rate. There is nothing which gives a man consequence and renders him fit for command, like a support that renders him independent of everybody but the state he serves.

With respect to the men, nothing but a good bounty

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can obtain them upon a permanent establishment; and for no shorter time, than the continuance of the war, ought they to be engaged; as facts incontestably prove, that the difficulty and cost of enlistments increase with time. When the army was first raised at Cambridge, I am persuaded the men might have been got, without a bounty, for the war. After this, they began to see that the contest was not likely to end so speedily as was imagined, and to feel their consequence by remarking, that, to get in their militia in the course of the last year, many towns were induced to give them a bounty. Foreseeing the evils resulting from this, and the destructive consequences, which unavoidably would follow short enlistments, I took the liberty in a long letter written by myself to recommend the enlistments for and during the war, assigning such reasons for it as experience has since convinced me were well founded. At that time, twenty dollars would, I am persuaded, have engaged the men for this term. But it will not do to look back; and, if the present opportunity is slipped, I am persuaded that twelve months more will increase our difficulties fourfold. I shall therefore take the freedom of giving it as my opinion, that a good bounty should be immediately offered, aided by the proffer of at least a hundred or hundred and fifty acres of land, and a suit of clothes and blanket to each non-commissioned officer and soldier; as I have good authority for saying, that, however high the men's pay may appear, it is barely sufficient, in the present scarcity and dearth of all kinds of goods, to keep them in clothes, much less afford support to their families.

If this encouragement then is given to the men, and such pay allowed the officers as will induce gentlemen of character and liberal sentiments to engage, and proper care and precaution are used in the nomination, (having more

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regard to the characters of persons, than to the number of men they can enlist,) we should in a little time have an army able to cope with any that can be opposed to it, as there are excellent materials to form one out of. But while the only merit an officer possesses is his ability to raise men, while those men consider and treat him as an equal, and, in the character of an officer, regard him no more than a broomstick, being mixed together as one common herd, no order nor discipline can prevail; nor will the officer ever meet with that respect, which is essentially necessary to due subordination.

To place any dependence upon militia is assuredly resting upon a broken staff. Men just dragged from the tender scenes of domestic life, unaccustomed to the din of arms, totally unacquainted with every kind of military skill, (which being followed by want of confidence in themselves, when opposed to troops regularly trained, disciplined, and appointed, superior in knowledge and superior in arms,) makes them timid and ready to fly from their own shadows. Besides the sudden change in their manner of living, (particularly in the lodging,) brings on sickness in many, impatience in all, and such an unconquerable desire of returning to their respective homes, that it not only produces shameful and scandalous desertions among themselves, but infuses the like spirit in others. Again, men accustomed to unbounded freedom and no control cannot brook the restraint, which is indispensably necessary to the good order and government of an army; without which, licentiousness and every kind of disorder triumphantly reign. To bring men to a proper degree of subordination is not the work of a day, a month, or even a year; and, unhappily for us and the cause we are engaged in, the little discipline I have been laboring to establish in the army under my immediate command is in a manner

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done away, by having such a mixture of troops, as have been called together within these few months.

Relaxed and as unfit as our rules and regulations of war are for the government of an army, the militia (those properly so called, for of these we have two sorts, the six-months' men, and those sent in as temporary aid) do not think themselves subject to them, and therefore take liberties, which the soldier is punished for. This creates jealousy; jealousy begets dissatisfaction; and these by degrees ripen into mutiny, keeping the whole army in a confused and disordered state, rendering the time of those, who wish to see regularity and good order prevail, more unhappy than words can describe. Besides this, such repeated changes take place, that all arrangement is set at nought, and the constant fluctuation of things deranges every plan as fast as adopted.

These, Sir, Congress may be assured, are but a small part of the inconveniences, which might be enumerated, and attributed to militia; but there is one, that merits particular attention, and that is the expense. Certain I am, that it would be cheaper to keep fifty or a hundred thousand in constant pay, than to depend upon half the number and supply the other half occasionally by militia. The time the latter are in pay before and after they are in camp, assembling and marching, the waste of ammunition, the consumption of stores, which, in spite of every resolution or requisition of Congress, they must be furnished with, or sent home, added to other incidental expenses consequent upon their coming and conduct in camp, surpasses all idea, and destroys every kind of regularity and economy, which you could establish among fixed and settled troops, and will, in my opinion, prove, if the scheme is adhered to, the ruin of our cause.

The jealousy of a standing army, and the evils to be

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apprehended from one, are remote, and, in my judgment, situated and circumstanced as we are, not at all to be dreaded; but the consequence of wanting one, according to my ideas formed from the present view of things, is certain and inevitable ruin. For, if I was called upon to declare upon oath, whether the militia have been most serviceable or hurtful upon the whole, I should subscribe to the latter. I do not mean by this, however, to arraign the conduct of Congress; in so doing I should equally condemn my own measures, if I did not my judgment; but experience, which is the best criterion to work by, so fully, clearly, and decisively reprobates the practice of trusting to militia, that no man, who regards order, regularity, and economy, or who has any regard for his own honor, character, or peace of mind, will risk them upon this issue.

An army formed of good officers moves like clockwork; but there is no situation upon earth less enviable, nor more distressing, than that person's, who is at the head of troops which are regardless of order and discipline, and who are unprovided with almost every necessary. In a word, the difficulties, which have for ever surrounded me since I have been in the service, and kept my mind constantly upon the stretch, the wounds, which my feelings as an officer have received by a thousand things, which have happened contrary to my expectations and wishes; the effect of my own conduct, and the present appearance of things, so little pleasing to myself, as to render it a matter of no surprise to me if I should stand capitally censured by Congress; added to a consciousness of my inability to govern an army composed of such discordant parts, and under such a variety of intricate and perplexing circumstances;—induces not only a belief, but a thorough conviction in my mind, that it will be impossible, unless there is a thorough change in our military system, for me to conduct matters in such

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a manner as to give satisfaction to the public, which is all the recompense I aim at, or ever wished for.

Before I conclude, I must apologize for the liberties taken in this letter, and for the blots and scratchings therein, not having time to give it more correctly. With truth I can add, that, with every sentiment of respect and esteem, I am yours and the Congress's most obedient, etc.

On the Difficulties of His Position—Directions for Building

To Lund Washington

COL. MORRIS'S, ON THE HEIGHTS OF HARLEM.

30 September, 1776.

Dear Lund: Your letter of the 18th, which is the only one received and unanswered, now lies before me. The amazement which you seem to be in at the unaccountable measures which have been adopted by [Congress] would be a good deal increased if I had time to unfold the whole system of their management since this time twelve months. I do not know how to account for the unfortunate steps which have been taken but from that fatal idea of conciliation which prevailed so long—fatal, I call it, because from my soul I wish it may prove so, though my fears lead me to think there is too much danger of it. This time last year I pointed out the evil consequences of short enlistments, the expenses of militia, and the little dependence that was to be placed in them. I assured [Congress] that the longer they delayed raising a standing army, the more difficult and chargeable would they find it to get one, and that, at the same time that the militia would answer no valuable purpose, the frequent calling them in would be

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attended with an expense, that they could have no conception of. Whether, as I have said before, the unfortunate hope of reconciliation was the cause, or the fear of a standing army prevailed, I will not undertake to say; but the policy was to engage men for twelve months only. The consequence of which, you have had great bodies of militia in pay that never were in camp; you have had immense quantities of provisions drawn by men that never rendered you one hour's service (at least usefully), and this is the most profuse and wasteful way. Your stores have been expended, and every kind of military [discipline?] destroyed by them; your numbers fluctuating, uncertain, and forever far short of report—at no one time, I believe, equal to twenty thousand men fit for duty. At present our numbers fit for duty (by this day's report) amount to 14,759, besides 3,427 on command, and the enemy within stone's throw of us. It is true a body of militia are again ordered out, but they come without any conveniences and soon return. I discharged a regiment the other day that had in it fourteen rank and file fit for duty only, and several that had less than fifty. In short, such is my situation that if I were to wish the bitterest curse to an enemy on this side of the grave, I should put him in my stead with my feelings; and yet I do not know what plan of conduct to pursue. I see the impossibility of serving with reputation, or doing any essential service to the cause by continuing in command, and yet I am told that if I quit the command inevitable ruin will follow from the distraction that will ensue. In confidence I tell you that I never was in such an unhappy, divided state since I was born. To lose all comfort and happiness on the one hand, whilst I am fully persuaded that under such a system of management as has been adopted, I cannot have the least chance for reputation, nor those allowances

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made which the nature of the case requires; and to be told, on the other, that if I leave the service all will be lost, is, at the same time that I am bereft of every peaceful moment, distressing to a degree. But I will be done with the subject, with the precaution to you that it is not a fit one to be publicly known or discussed. If I fall, it may not be amiss that these circumstances be known, and declaration made in credit to the justice of my character. And if the men will stand by me (which by the by I despair of), I am resolved not to be forced from this ground while I have life; and a few days will determine the point, if the enemy should not change their plan of operations; for they certainly will not—I am sure they ought not—to waste the season that is now fast advancing, and must be precious to them. I thought to have given you a more explicit account of my situation, expectation, and feelings, but I have not time. I am wearied to death all day with a variety of perplexing circumstances—disturbed at the conduct of the militia, whose behavior and want of discipline has done great injury to the other troops, who never had officers, except in a few instances, worth the bread they eat. My time, in short, is so much engrossed that I have not leisure for corresponding, unless it is on mere matters of public business.

I therefore in answer to your last Letter of the 18th shall say

With respect to the chimney, I would not have you for the sake of a little work spoil the look of the fireplaces, tho' that in the parlor must, I should think, stand as it does; not so much on account of the wainscotting, which I think must be altered (on account of the door leading into the new building,) as on account of the chimney piece and the manner of its fronting into the room. The chimney in the room above ought, if it could be so contrived, to be

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an angle chimney as the others are: but I would not have this attempted at the expence of pulling down the partition.—The chimney in the new room should be exactly in the middle of it—the doors and every thing else to be exactly answerable and uniform—in short I would have the whole executed in a masterly manner.

You ought surely to have a window in the gable end of the new cellar (either under the Venitian window, or one on each side of it).

Let Mr. Herbert know that I shall be very happy in getting his brother exchanged as soon as possible, but as the enemy have more of our officers than we of theirs, and some of ours have been long confined (and claim ye right of being first exchanged,) I do not know how far it may be in my power at this time, to comply with his desires.

Remember me to all our neighbors and friends, particularly to Colo. Mason, to whom I would write if I had time to do it fully and satisfactorily. Without this, I think the correspondence on my part would be unavailing—

I am with truth and sincerity,

Dr Lund yr affect'e friend.

In Desperate Straits

To Lund Washington

FALLS OF DELAWARE, SOUTH SIDE,
10 December, 1776.

Dear Lund: I wish to Heaven it was in my power to give you a more favorable account of our situation than it is. Our numbers, quite inadequate to the task of opposing that part of the army under the command of General Howe, being reduced by sickness, desertion, and political

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deaths (on or before the first instant, and having no assistance from the militia), were obliged to retire before the enemy, who were perfectly well informed of our situation, till we came to this place, where I have no idea of being able to make a stand, as my numbers, till joined by the Philadelphia militia, did not exceed three thousand men fit for duty. Now we may be about five thousand to oppose Howe's whole army, that part of it excepted which sailed under the command of Gen. Clinton. I tremble for Philadelphia. Nothing, in my opinion, but Gen. Lee's speedy arrival, who has been long expected, though still at a distance (with about three thousand men), can save it. We have brought over and destroyed all the boats we could lay our hands on upon the Jersey shore for many miles above and below this place; but it is next to impossible to guard a shore for sixty miles, with less than half the enemy's numbers; when by force or stratagem they may suddenly attempt a passage in many different places. At present they are encamped or quartered along the other shore above and below us (rather this place, for we are obliged to keep a face toward them) for fifteen miles.

December 17, TEN MILES ABOVE THE FALLS.

I have since moved up to this place, to be more convenient to our great and extensive defences of this river. Hitherto, by our destruction of the boats, and vigilance in watching the fords of the river above the falls (which are now rather high), we have prevented them from crossing; but how long we shall be able to do it God only knows, as they are still hovering about the river. And if everything else fails, will wait till the 1st of January, when there will be no other men to oppose them but militia, none of which but those from Philadelphia, mentioned in the first part of the letter, are yet come (although I am

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told some are expected from the back counties). When I say none but militia, I am to except the Virginia regiments and the shattered remains of Smallwood's, which, by fatigue, want of clothes, etc., are reduced to nothing—Weedon's, which was the strongest, not having more than between one hundred and thirty to one hundred and forty men fit for duty, the rest being in the hospitals. The unhappy policy of short enlistments and a dependence upon militia will, I fear, prove the downfall of our cause, though early pointed out with an almost prophetic spirit! Our cause has also received a severe blow in the captivity of Gen. Lee. Unhappy man! Taken by his own imprudence, going three or four miles from his own camp, and within twenty of the enemy, notice of which by a rascally Tory was given a party of light horse seized him in the morning after travelling all night, and carried him off in high triumph and with every mark of indignity, not even suffering him to get his hat or surtout coat. The troops that were under his command are not yet come up with us, though they, I think, may be expected to-morrow. A large part of the Jerseys have given every proof of disaffection that they can do, and this part of Pennsylvania are equally inimical. In short, your imagination can scarce extend to a situation more distressing than mine. Our only dependence now is upon the speedy enlistment of a new army. If this fails, I think the game will be pretty well up, as, from disaffection and want of spirit and fortitude, the inhabitants, instead of resistance, are offering submission and taking protection from Gen. Howe in Jersey.

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On the Need of a Regular Army

To the President of Congress

HEAD-QUARTERS, AT KEITH'S, 16 December, 1776.

Sir: In a late letter, which I had the honor of addressing you, I took the liberty to recommend, that more battalions should be raised for the new army, than what had been voted. Having fully considered the matter, I am more and more convinced, not only of the propriety, but of the necessity of the measure. That the enemy will leave nothing un essayed, in the course of the next campaign, to reduce these States to the rule of a most lawless and insufferable tyranny, must be obvious to everyone; and that the militia are not to be depended on, or aid expected from them but in cases of the most pressing emergency, is not to be doubted. The first of these propositions is unquestionable, and fatal experience has given her sanction to the truth of the latter. Indeed, their lethargy of late, and backwardness to turn out at this alarming crisis, seem to justify an apprehension, that nothing can bring them from their homes. For want of their assistance, a large part of Jersey has been exposed to ravage and to plunder; nor do I know that Pennsylvania would share a better fate, could General Howe effect a passage across the Delaware with a respectable force. These considerations have induced me to wish, that no reliance, except such as may arise from necessity, should ever be had in them again; and to make further mention to Congress of the expediency of increasing their army. I trust the measure will meet with their earliest attention.

Had I leisure and were it necessary, I could say much upon this head; but, as I have not, and the matter is well

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understood, I will not add much. By augmenting the number of your battalions, you will augment your force; the officers of each will have their interest and influence; and, upon the whole, their numbers will be much greater, though they should not be complete. Added to this, from the present confused state of Jersey, and the improper appointment of officers in many instances, I have little or no expectation that she will be able to raise all the troops exacted from her, though I think it might be done, were suitable spirited gentlemen commissioned, who would exert themselves, and encourage the people, many of whom (from a failure in this instance, and who are well disposed) are making their submission. In a word, the next will be a trying campaign; and as all that is dear and valuable may depend upon the issue of it, I would advise, that nothing should be omitted, that shall seem necessary to our success. Let us have a respectable army, and such as will be competent to every exigency. I will also add, that the critical situation in our affairs, and the dissolution of our present force, now at hand, require, that every nerve and exertion be employed for recruiting the new battalions. One part of General Howe's movements at this time, I believe, is with a design to distract us and prevent this business. If the inclemency of the weather should force him into winter-quarters, he will not remain there longer than necessity shall oblige him; he will commence his operations in a short space of time; and in that time our levies must be made up, to oppose him, or I fear the most melancholy of all events must take place.

The Cloathing of the Troops is a matter of infinite importance, and if it could be accomplished, would have a happy effect. Their distresses are extremely great, many of 'em being entirely naked and most so thinly clad as to be unfit for service. I must entreat Congress to write

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to the Agents and Contractors upon this subject, that every possible supply may be procured and forwarded with the utmost expedition. I cannot attend to the business myself, having more than I can possibly do besides.

A Request for Increased Powers

To the President of Congress

CAMP, ABOVE TRENTON FALLS,
20 December, 1776.

Sir: The pay of our artillerists bearing no proportion to that in the English and French service, the murmuring and dissatisfaction thereby occasioned, the absolute impossibility, as I am told, of getting them upon the old terms, and the unavoidable necessity of obtaining them at all events, have induced me, also by advice, to promise officers and men, that their pay shall be augmented twenty-five per cent, or that their engagements shall become null and void. This may appear to Congress premature and unwarrantable. But, Sir, if they view our situation in the light it strikes their officers, they will be convinced of the utility of the measure, and that the execution could not be delayed till after their meeting at Baltimore. In short, the present exigency of our affairs will not admit of delay, either in council or the field; for well convinced I am, that, if the enemy go into quarters at all, it will be for a short season. But I rather think the design of General Howe is to possess himself of Philadelphia this winter, if possible; and in truth I do not see what is to prevent him, as ten days more will put an end to the existence of our army. That one great point is to keep us as much harassed as possible, with a view to injure the recruiting

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service and hinder a collection of stores and other necessities for the next campaign, I am as clear in, as I am of my existence. If, therefore, we have to provide in the short interval and make these great and arduous preparations, every matter that in its nature is self-evident is to be referred to Congress, at the distance of a hundred and thirty or forty miles, so much time must necessarily elapse, as to defeat the end in view.

It may be said, that this is an application for powers that are too dangerous to be entrusted. I can only add, that desperate diseases require desperate remedies; and I with truth declare, that I have no lust after power, but I wish with as much fervency as any man upon this wide-extended continent for an opportunity of turning the sword into the ploughshare. But my feelings, as an officer and a man, have been such as to force me to say, that no person ever had a greater choice of difficulties to contend with than I have. It is needless to add, that short enlistments, and a mistaken dependence upon militia, have been the origin of all our misfortunes, and the great accumulation of our debt. We find, Sir, that the enemy are daily gathering strength from the disaffected. This strength, like a snow-ball by rolling, will increase, unless some means can be devised to check effectually the progress of the enemy's arms. Militia may possibly do it for a little while; but in a little while, also, and the militia of those States, which have been frequently called upon, will not turn out at all; or, if they do, it will be with so much reluctance and sloth, as to amount to the same thing. Instance New Jersey! Witness Pennsylvania! Could any thing but the river Delaware have saved Philadelphia? Can any thing (the exigency of the case indeed may justify it) be more destructive to the recruiting service, than giving ten dollars, bounty for six weeks' service of the

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militia, who come in, you cannot tell how, go, you cannot tell when, and act, you cannot tell where, consume your provisions, exhaust your stores, and leave you at last at a critical moment?

\ In a former letter, I intimated my opinion of the necessity of having a brigadier for every three regiments, and a major-general to every three brigades, at most. I think no time is to be lost in making the appointments, that the arrangements may be consequent. I have labored, ever since I have been in the service, to discourage all kinds of local attachments and distinctions of country, denominating the whole by the greater name of *American*, but I have found it impossible to overcome prejudices; and, under the new establishment, I conceive it best to stir up an emulation; in order to do which, would it not be better for each State to furnish, though not to appoint, their own brigadiers? This, if known to be part of the establishment, might prevent a good deal of contention and jealousy; and would, I believe, be the means of promotions going forward with more satisfaction, and quiet the higher officers.

The Battle of Trenton

To the President of Congress

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEWTOWN, 27 December, 1776.

Sir: I have the pleasure of congratulating you upon the success of an enterprise, which I had formed against a detachment of the enemy lying in Trenton, and which was executed yesterday morning. The evening of the 25th I ordered the troops intended for this service to parade back to McKonkey's Ferry, that they might begin to pass as soon as it grew dark, imagining we should be able to throw

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them all over, with the necessary artillery, by twelve o'clock, and that we might easily arrive at Trenton by five in the morning, the distance being about nine miles. But the quantity of ice, made that night, impeded the passage of the boats so much, that it was three o'clock before the artillery could all be got over; and near four before the troops took up their line of march. This made me despair of surprising the town, as I well knew we could not reach it before the day was fairly broke. But as I was certain there was no making a retreat without being discovered and harassed on repassing the river, I determined to push on at all events. I formed my detachment into two divisions, one to march by the lower or river road, the other by the upper or Pennington road. As the divisions had nearly the same distance to march, I ordered each of them, immediately upon forcing the out-guards, to push directly into the town, that they might charge the enemy before they had time to form.

The upper division arrived at the enemy's advanced posts exactly at eight o'clock; and in three minutes after, I found, from the fire on the lower road, that the division had also got up. The out-guards made but small opposition, though, for their numbers, they behaved very well, keeping up a constant retreating fire from behind houses. We presently saw their main body formed; but, from their motions, they seemed undetermined how to act. Being hard pressed by our troops, who had already got possession of their artillery, they attempted to file off by a road on their right, leading to Princeton. But, perceiving their intention, I threw a body of troops in their way, which immediately checked them. Finding from our disposition, that they were surrounded, and that they must inevitably be cut to pieces if they made any further resistance, they agreed to lay down their arms. The number that submitted in this

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manner was twenty-three officers and eight hundred and eighty-six men. Colonel Rahl, the commanding officer, and seven others were found wounded in the town. I do not exactly know how many were killed; but I fancy not above twenty or thirty, as they never made any regular stand. Our loss is very trifling indeed, only two officers and one or two privates wounded.

In justice to the officers and men, I must add, that their behavior upon this occasion reflects the highest honor upon them. The difficulty of passing the river in a very severe night, and their march through a violent storm of snow and hail, did not in the least abate their ardor; but, when they came to the charge, each seemed to vie with the other in pressing forward; and were I to give a preference to any particular corps, I should do great injustice to the others.

A Pledge to Use Powers to Establish Liberty

*To Robert Morris, George Clymer, and George Walton, a
Committee of Congress*

HEAD-QUARTERS, TRENTON, 1 January, 1777.

Gentlemen: The accounts you give me in yours of the 28th ulto. of the good effects, that are likely to flow from our success at Trenton, add not a little to the satisfaction I have felt on that occasion. You are pleased to pay me many personal compliments, as if the merit of that affair was due solely to me; but I assure you, the other general officers, who assisted me in the plan and execution, have full as good right to your encomiums as myself.

Yours of the 31st of last month enclosed to me sundry resolves of Congress, by which I find they have done me

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the honor to entrust me with powers, in my military capacity, of the highest nature and almost unlimited in extent. Instead of thinking myself freed from all civil obligations, by this mark of their confidence, I shall constantly bear in mind, that as the sword was the last resort for the preservation of our liberties, so it ought to be the first thing laid aside, when those liberties are firmly established. I shall instantly set about making the most necessary reforms in the army; but it will not be in my power to make so great a progress, as if I had a little leisure time upon my hands.

On the Character of Officers

To Colonel George Baylor

MORRISTOWN, 9 January, 1777.

Dear Baylor: Your desires of commanding a regiment of horse I cheerfully yield to, because it is the recommendation of Congress, your own wish, and my desire. As nothing contributes so much to the constitution of a good regiment, as a good corps of officers, and no method so likely to obtain these, as leaving the choice in a great measure to the gentleman, who is to reap the honors or share the disgrace arising from their behavior, I shall vest you with the power of nominating the officers of your own regiment, except the field-officers and those of the troop commanded by Geo. Lewis, which I shall annex to your regiment, instead of Sheldon's, and except a lieutenancy in some troop for Starke. When I talk of giving you the nomination of the officers, I would have it understood, that I reserve to myself a negative upon a part or the whole, if I have reason to suspect an improper choice.

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I earnestly recommend to you to be circumspect in your choice of officers. Take none but gentlemen; let no local attachments influence you; do not suffer your good nature, when an application is made, to say yes, when you ought to say no; remember, that it is a public, not a private cause, that is to be injured or benefited by your choice; recollect, also, that no instance has yet happened of good or bad behavior in a corps in our service, that has not originated with the officers. Do not take old men, nor yet fill your corps with boys, especially for captains.

On Imagined Slights

To Major-General Sullivan

MORRISTOWN, 15 March, 1777.

Do not, my dear General Sullivan, torment yourself any longer with imaginary slights, and involve others in the perplexities you feel on that score. No other officer of rank, in the whole army, has so often conceived himself neglected, slighted, and ill treated, as you have done, and none I am sure has had less cause than yourself to entertain such ideas. Mere accidents, things which have occurred in the common course of service, have been considered by you as designed affronts. But pray, Sir, in what respect did General Greene's late command at Fort Lee differ from his present command at Baskenridge; or from yours at Chatham? And what kind of separate command had General Putnam at New York? I never heard of any, except his commanding there ten days before my arrival from Boston, and one day after I had left it for Haerlem Heights, as senior officer. In like manner at Philadelphia, how did his command there differ from the

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one he has at Princeton, and wherein does either vary from yours at Chatham? Are there any peculiar emoluments or honors to be reaped in the one case and not in the other? No. Why then these unreasonable, these unjustifiable suspicions? Suspicions, which can answer to no other end, than to poison your own happiness, and add vexation to that of others. General Heath, it is true, was ordered to Peekskill, so was General Spencer, by the mere chapter of accidents (being almost in the country), to Providence, to watch the motions of the fleet, then hovering in the Sound. What followed after to either, or both, was more the effect of chance than design.

Your ideas and mine, respecting separate commands, have but little analogy. I know of but one separate command, properly so called, and that is in the Northern Department; and General Sullivan, General St. Clair, or any other general officer at Ticonderoga will be considered in no other light, whilst there is a superior officer in the department, than if they were placed at Chatham, Baskenridge, or Princeton. But I have not time to dwell upon subjects of this kind. In quitting it, I shall do it with an earnest exhortation, that you will not suffer yourself to be teased with evils, that only exist in the imagination, and with slights, that have no existence at all; keeping in mind, at the same time, that, if distant armies are to be formed, there are several gentlemen before you, in point of rank, who have a right to claim a preference.

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A Plea for Patience under Apparent Injustice

To Brigadier-General Arnold

MORRISTOWN, 3 April, 1777.

Dear Sir: I am this day favd. with yours of the 26th last month and a few days ago with that of the 11th. It is needless for me to say much upon a subject, which must undoubtedly give you a good deal of uneasiness. I confess I was surprised when I did not see your name in the list of major-generals, and was so fully of opinion, that there was some mistake in the matter, that I, (as you may recollect,) desired you not to take any hasty step, before the intention of Congress was fully known. The point does not now admit of a doubt, and is of so delicate a nature, that I will not even undertake to advise. Your own feelings must be your Guide. As no particular Charge is alleg'd against you, I do not see upon what Ground you can demand a Court of Inquiry. Besides, public bodies are not amenable for their Actions. They place and displace at pleasure; and all the satisfaction that an individual can obtain, when he is overlooked, is, if innocent, a consciousness that he has not deserved such treatment for his honest exertions. Your determination not to quit your present command, while any danger to the public might ensue from your leaving it, deserves my thanks, and justly entitles you to the thanks of your country.

General Greene, who has lately been at Philadelphia, took occasion to inquire upon what principle the Congress proceeded in their late promotion of general officers. He was informed, that the members from each State seemed to insist upon having a proportion of general officers, adequate to the number of men which they furnish, and that, as

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Connecticut had already two major-generals, it was their full share. I confess this is a strange mode of reasoning; but it may serve to show you, that a promotion, which was due to your seniority, was not overlooked for want of Merit in you.

Devotion of the Officers Necessary

To Brigadier-General Glover

MORRISTOWN, 26 April, 1777.

Sir: After the conversations I had with you, before you left the army last winter, I was not a little surprised at the contents of yours of the 1st instant. As I had not the least doubt but you would accept of the commission of brigadier, if conferred upon you by Congress, I put your name down on the list of those, whom I thought proper for the command, and whom I wished to see preferred. Diffidence in an officer is a good mark, because he will always endeavor to bring himself up to what he conceives to be the full line of his duty; but I think I may tell you without flattery, that I know of no Man better qualified than yourself to conduct a brigade. You have activity and industry; and as you very well know the duty of a colonel, you know how to exact that duty from others.

I have with great Concern observed the almost universal listlessness, that prevails throughout the continent; and I believe that nothing has contributed to it more than the Resignation of officers, who stepped early forward and led the people into the great Cause, in which we are too deeply embarked to look back, or to hope for any other terms, than those we can gain by the Sword. Can any Resistance

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be expected from the People, when deserted by their leaders? Our enemies count upon the Resignation of every Officer of Rank at this time, as a distrust of and desertion from the Cause, and rejoice accordingly. When you consider these Matters, I hope you will think no more of private inconveniences, but that you will, with all expedition, come forward and take that command, which has been assigned to you. As I fully depend upon seeing you, I shall not mention any thing that has passed between us upon this subject to Congress.

A Personal Guard

To Colonel Alexander Spotswood

MORRISTOWN, 30 April, 1777.

Sir: I want to form a company for my guard. In doing this I wish to be extremely cautious, because it is more than probable, that, in the course of the campaign, my baggage, papers, and other matters of great public import, may be committed to the sole care of these men. This being premised, in order to impress you with proper attention in the choice, I have to request, that you will immediately furnish me with four men of your regiment; and, as it is my farther wish that this company should look well and be nearly of a size, I desire that none of the men may exceed in stature five feet ten inches, nor fall short of five feet nine inches, sober, young, active, and well made. When I recommend care in yr. choice, I would be understood to mean men of good character in the regiment, that possess the pride of appearing clean and soldierlike. I am satisfied, there can be no absolute security for the fidelity of this class of people, but yet I

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think it most likely to be found in those, who have family connexions in the country. You will therefore send me none but natives, and men of some property, if you have them. I must insist, that, in making this choice, you give no intimation of my preference of natives, as I do not want to create any invidious distinction between them and the foreigners.

On the Treatment of Smallpox

To John Augustine Washington

MIDDLEBROOK, — June, 1777.

Dear Brother: I hope I may congratulate you and my Sister on her happy recovery from the Small-pox, together with your Children,—the loss my Brother Sam has sustained will I fear, be very sensibly felt by him. Some mismanagement must surely have been in the way, for the Small Pox by Inoculation appears to me to be nothing; my whole family, I understand, are likely to get well through the disorder, with no other assistance than that of Doctor Lund—In short, one of the best Physicians in this Army has assur'd me, that the great skill which many of the faculty pretend to have in the management of this disorder, and the great Art necessary to treat the patient well, is neither more nor less than a cheat upon the world, that in general an old woman may Inoculate with as much success as the best Physician. The whole art lying in keeping the Patient rather low in diet, and cool, especially at the period of the eruptive fever. This he says is the only Art requisite.—To this, and the means by which the disorder is communicated (instead of receiving the Infection in ye natural way) the ease with which

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Patients get through, is to be attributed. There are particular cases, he adds, where some other disorder, or some uncommon circumstances cast up, that may require the aid of Physicians, but in general neither Physicians nor Physic is necessary except a few purgatives, which the white walnut bark, and many other things, the natural product of the country affords. That this is truly the case, I firmly believe, and my own People (not less I suppose than between two and three hundred), getting happily through it by following these directions, is no Inconsiderable proof of it— Surely that Impolitic Act, restraining Inoculation in Virginia, can never be continued— If I was a Member of that Assembly, I would rather move for a Law to compel the Masters of Families to inoculate every child born within a certain limited time under Severe Penalties.

On Criticism of a Fabian Policy

To Joseph Reed

MIDDLEBROOK, 23 June, 1777.

Dear Sir: It gives me pleasure to learn from your letter that the reasons assigned by me to General Arnold, for not attacking the enemy in their situation between the Raritan and Millstone, met with the approbation of those who were acquainted with them. We have some amongst us, and I dare say generals, who wish to make themselves popular at the expense of others, or who think the cause is not to be advanced otherwise than by fighting—the peculiar circumstances under which it is to be done, and the consequences which may follow, are objects too trivial for their attention,—but as I have one great end in view,

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I shall, maugre all the [illegible] of this kind, steadily pursue the means which in my judgment leads to the accomplishment of it, not doubting but that the candid part of mankind, if they are convinced of my integrity, will make proper allowance for my inexperience and frailties. I will agree to be loaded with all the obloquy they can bestow, if I commit a wilful error.

On Enlistments and Supplies for the Continental Army

To the Committee of Congress

CAMP AT THE CLOVE, 19 July, 1777.

Gentlemen: The completion of the Continental Regiments is a matter of such Infinite importance, that I think no means should be left unessayed, to accomplish it—Drafting, where the powers of Government are adequate, would be the speediest and most effectual, but if it should be thought unadvisable to attempt this mode, next to it, I would recommend, that the business of recruiting should be taken entirely out of the hands of the officers of the Army, and, that each State should appoint some person of known activity (one for instance who has been a good under Sheriff) in each County or Township not only to recruit but to apprehend Deserters—these persons to be liberally rewarded for each recruit and Deserter whom they shall deliver at stated Periods, and places, to officers appointed to receive,—discipline and march them to the Army—none of these recruiters to have the smallest power to act out of their own districts but to be absolutely fixed to them.—A mode of this kind would in my humble opinion, be less burthensome to the public than the present,

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prevent the Idle habits which recruiting officers contract, not only injurious to themselves but others; the most effectual means, which can be devised, for the recovery of Deserters the surest way of keeping your regiments of equal strength and of making the duty more equal in the detail of it. In a word, many valuable advantages would result from it whilst I can suggest but one reason against it (and that, fully satisfied I am, when weighed in the scale of Interest will not operate) I mean the keeping so many officers in Camp who might be spared from the duties of the Field till the regiments are stronger than at present.—The Sixteen additional regiments labor under such disadvantages in some states as to render the interposition of Congress (in some shape or other) indispensably necessary.

With respect to the Food, considering we are in such an extensive and abundant Country, no army was ever worse supplied than ours with many essential articles of it—our Soldiers, the greatest part of last Campaign, and the whole of this, have scarcely tasted any kind of Vegetables; had but little salt and Vinegar, which would have been a tolerable substitute for Vegetables; have been in a great measure strangers to, neither have they been provided with proper drink.—Beer or Cyder seldom comes within the verge of the Camp, and Rum in much too small quantities—Thus, to devouring large quantities of animal food, untemper'd by vegetables or vinegar, or by any kind of Drink but water, and eating indifferent Bread (but, for this last a remedy is providing) are to be ascribed the many putrid diseases incident to the Army, and the lamentable mortality that attended us last Campaign.—If these evils can be remedied the expence and trouble ought not to be obstacles.—Though some kind of Vegetables are not to be had, others are; which together with sour Crout and

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vinegar might easily be had, if proper persons acquainted with the business, were employed therein.

Soap is another article in great demand, the Continental allowance is too small, and dear, as every necessary of life is now got, a soldier's pay will not enable him to purchase, by which means his consequent dirtiness adds not a little to the disease of the Army.—

I have no reason to accuse the Clothier Genl. of Inattention to his department, and therefore, as his supplies are incompetent to the wants of the Army, I am to suppose his resources are unequal. Ought not each State to be called upon to draw such supplies from the Country Manufactories as can be afforded? particularly of shoes, stockings, shirts, and Blankets; articles indispensably necessary and of which scarce too many can be provided—In the meanwhile every provision to be making for Clothing the Troops uniformly, and warm in the Winter. It is a maxim, which needs no illustration, that nothing can be of more importance in an Army than the Clothing and feeding it well,—on these the health, comfort, and spirits of the Soldiers, essentially depend; and it is a melancholy fact, that the American Army are miserably defective in both these respects—the distress most of them are in, for want of Clothing is painful to humanity, dispiriting to themselves, and discouraging to every Officer.—It makes every pretention to the preservation of cleanliness impossible, exposes them to a variety of disorders—and abates, or destroys that military pride without which nothing can be expected from any Army.

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On Burgoyne's Advance

To Major-General Schuyler

ELEVEN MILES IN THE CLOVE, 22 July, 1777.

Dear Sir: I yesterday evening received the favor of your Letters of the 17th & 18th Inst. with their Inclosures. I am heartily glad you have found two such advantageous spots to take post at, and I hope the progress of the enemy will not be so rapid, as to prevent your throwing up such lines, as you may esteem necessary for their defence. Though our affairs, for some days past, have worn a dark and gloomy aspect, I yet look forward to a fortunate and happy change. I trust General Burgoyne's army will meet sooner or later an effectual check, and, as I suggested before, that the success he has had will precipitate his Ruin. From your accounts he appears to be pursuing that line of conduct, which of all others is most favorable to us; I mean acting in Detachment. This conduct will certainly give room for Enterprise on our part, and expose his parties to great hazard. Could we be so happy, as to cut one of them off, supposing it should not exceed four, five, or six hundred men, it would inspirit the people and do away much of their present anxiety. In such an Event, they would lose sight of past misfortunes, and, urged at the same time by a regard for their own security, they would fly to arms and afford every aid in their power.

Your exertions to bring the people to view things in their proper light, to impress them with a just sense of the fatal consequences that will result to themselves, their wives, their children, and their country from their taking a wrong part, and for preventing Toryism, cannot be too

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great. General Burgoyne, I have no doubt, will practise every art, which his Invention shall point out, to turn their minds and seduce them from their allegiance. He should be counteracted as much as possible, as it is of the last importance to keep them firm and steady in their attachments. You have already given your attention to this matter, and I am persuaded you will omit nothing in your power to effect these great and essential points. Stopping the roads and ordering the cattle to be removed were certainly right and judicious. If they are well accomplished, the enemy must be greatly retarded and distressed. I hope before this you have received the supplies of Ammunition mentioned in my late Letters. I fully expected too that the Camp Kettles which I ordered from hence on your first application had reached you, till yesterday, when I found on enquiry that the Qr. Master by some accident did not send 'em before three or four days ago.

P. S. It will not be advisable to repose too much confidence in the works you are about to erect, and from thence to collect a large Quantity of Stores. I begin to consider lines as a kind of Trap, and as not answering the valuable purposes expected from 'em, unless they are on passes that cannot be avoided by an enemy.

A Letter of Reproof

To Lieutenants Bird, Dorsey, Craig, Moore, and Gray

CAMP AT THE CROSS ROADS, Augt. 15, 1777.

Gentn.: In answer to your respective Letters without date, but presented to me yesterday, you will please to be inform'd

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First, that the pay of the Horse officers was fixed in December last, and at the same rates now existing; and

Secondly that I am not conscious of ever having said, or done any thing, that could lead to a belief, that the Rank of a Lieut. of Horse was to be equal to a Captain of foot for the obvious reasons, that neither justice, or usage, would authorize it.

How it came to pass, then, that you should conceive yourselves entitled to the Rank and pay of such officers is neither my business, nor Inclination to enquire into—This however I shall add,—that if your respective applications to resign, is the effect of hasty resolutions, you may take till to-morrow to reconsider, and recall your Letters.—But if on the other hand you shd then be in the same mind, I shall be ready to receive your Commissions if they have been deliver'd or give dismissions if they have not.—

Your wishes to resign at such a period as this (after time is allowed for reconsideration) will be sufficient evidence with me, that it is a disinclination to the Service, and not the mere disappointment of Rank and pay, that causes it; and therefore it may be unnecessary for me to add, that any future application from either of you to get into the Continental Service will be improper, and as far as it is in my power to make it so unavailing—

On the Distress of the Army

To Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Hamilton

CAMP, 22 September, 1777.

Sir: The distressed situation of the army for want of blankets, and many necessary articles of cloathing, is truly deplorable; and must inevitably be destructive to it, unless

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a speedy remedy be applied. Without a better supply than they at present have, it will be impossible for the men to support the fatigues of the campaign in the further progress of the approaching inclement season. This you well know to be a melancholy truth. It is equally the dictate of common sense and the opinion of the Physicians of the army, as well as of every officer in it. No supply can be drawn from the public magazines. We have therefore no resource but from the private stock of individuals. I feel, and I lament, the absolute necessity of requiring the inhabitants to contribute to those wants, which we have no other means of satisfying, and which if unremoved would involve the ruin of the army, and perhaps the ruin of America. Painful as it is to me to order and as it will be to you to execute the measure, I am compelled to desire you immediately to proceed to Philadelphia, and there procure from the inhabitants contributions of blankets and cloathing, and materials to answer the purposes of both, in proportion to the ability of each. This you will do with as much delicacy and discretion, as the nature of the business demands; and I trust the necessity will justify the proceeding in the eyes of every person well affected to the American cause, and that all good citizens will chearfully afford their assistance to soldiers, whose sufferings they are bound to commiserate, and who are eminently exposed to danger and distress, in defence of every thing they ought to hold dear.

As there are also a number of horses in Philadelphia both of public and private property, which would be a valuable acquisition to the enemy, should the city by any accident fall into their hands, you are hereby authorized and commanded to remove them thence into the Country to some place of greater security, and more remote from the operations of the enemy. You will stand in need of

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assistance from others to execute this commission with despatch and propriety, and you are therefore empowered to employ such persons as you shall think proper to aid you therein.

On the Character of General Conway

To Richard Henry Lee

MATUCHEN HILL, 17 October, 1777.

Dear Sir: If there is any truth in a report, which has been handed to me, vizt: that Congress hath appointed, or as others say are about to appoint, Brigadier Conway a major-general in this army, it will be as unfortunate a measure as ever was adopted. I may add, (and I think with truth,) that it will give a fatal blow to the existence of the army. Upon so interesting a subject, I must speak plain. The duty I owe my country, the ardent desire I have to promote its true interests, and justice to individuals, requires this of me. General Conway's merit, then, as an officer, and his importance in this army, exists more in his imagination, than in reality. For it is a maxim with him, to leave no service of his own untold, nor to want any thing, which is to be obtained by importunity.

But as I do not mean to detract from him any merit he possesses, and only wish to have the matter taken up upon its true ground, after allowing him every thing that his warmest friends will contend for, I would ask, why the youngest brigadier in the service (for I believe he is so) should be put over the heads of all the eldest, and thereby take rank and command gentlemen, who but yesterday were his seniors; gentlemen who, I will be bold to say, (in behalf of some of them at least,) are of sound judgment

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and unquestionable bravery? If there was a degree of conspicuous merit in General Conway, unpossessed by any of his seniors, the confusion, which might be occasioned by it, would stand warranted upon the principles of sound policy; for I do readily agree, that this is no time for trifling; but, at the same time that I cannot subscribe to the fact, this truth I am very well assured of (though I have not directly, nor indirectly, exchanged a word with any one of the brigadiers on the subject, nor am I certain that any one of them has heard of the appointment), that they will not serve under him. I leave you to guess, therefore, at the situation this army would be in at so important a crisis, if this event should take place. These gentlemen have feelings as officers; and though they do not dispute the authority of Congress to make appointments, they will judge of the propriety of acting under them.

In a word, the service is so difficult, and every necessary so expensive, that almost all our officers are tired out. Do not, therefore, afford them good prettexts for retiring. No day passes over my head without application for leave to resign. Within the last six days, I am certain, twenty commissions have been tendered to me. I must, therefore, conjure Congress to consider this matter well, and not, by a real act of injustice, compel some good officers to leave the service, and thereby incur a train of evils unforeseen and irremediable. To sum up the whole, I have been a slave to the service; I have undergone more than most men are aware of, to harmonize so many discordant parts; but it will be impossible for me to be of any further service, if such insuperable difficulties are thrown in my way. You may believe me, my good Sir, that I have no earthly views, but the public good, in what I have said. I have no prejudice against General Conway, nor desire to serve any other brigadier, further than I think the cause will be

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benefited by it; to bring which to a speedy and happy conclusion, is the most fervent wish of my soul.

Battle of Germantown

To John Augustine Washington

PHILADELPHIA COUNTY, 18 October, 1777.

Dear Brother: When my last to you was dated I know not; for truly I can say, that my whole time is so much engrossed, that I have scarcely a moment, but sleeping ones, for relaxation, or to indulge myself in writing to a friend. The anxiety you have been under, on acct of this army, I can easily conceive. Would to God there had been less cause for it; or that our situation at present was such as to promise much from it. The Enemy crossed the Schuylkill which, by the by, above the Falls (& the Falls you know is only five miles from the city) is as easily crossed in any place as Potomac Run, Aquia, or any other broad & shallow water, rather by stratagem; tho I do not know, that it was in our power to prevent it, as their manoeuvres made it necessary for us to attend to our Stores, which lay at Reading, towards which they seemed bending their course, and the loss of which must have proved our Ruin. After they had crossed, we took the first favorable opportunity of attacking them.

This was attempted by a night's march of fourteen miles to surprise them, which we effectually did, so far as to reach their guards before they had notice of our coming; and but for a thick Fog, which rendered so infinitely dark at times as not to distinguish friend from Foe at the distance of thirty yards, we should, I believe, have made a decisive and glorious day of it. But Provi-

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dence or some unaccountable something designed it otherwise; for after we had driven the Enemy a mile or two, after they were in the utmost confusion and flying before us in most places, after we were upon the point, (as it appeared to every body,) of grasping a compleat victory, our own troops took fright and fled with precipitation and disorder. How to acct for this, I know not; unless, as I before observed, the Fog represented their own Friends to them for a Reinforcement of the Enemy, as we attacked in different Quarters at the same time, and were about closing the wings of our army when this happened. One thing, indeed, contributed not a little to our misfortune, and that was want of ammunition on the right wing, which began the Engagement, and in the course of two hours and forty minutes, which time it lasted, had, (many of them,) expended the forty Rounds, that they took into the Field. After the Engagement we removed to a place about twenty miles from the enemy, to collect our Forces together, to take care of our wounded, get furnished with necessaries again, and be in a better posture, either for offensive or defensive operations. We are now advancing towards the Enemy again, being at this time within twelve miles of them.

Our loss in the late action was, in killed, wounded, and missing, about one thousand men, but of the missing, many, I dare say, took advantage of the times, and deserted. Genl. Nash of No. Carolina was wounded, and died two or three days after. Many valuable officers of ours was also wounded, and some killed. The Enemy's loss is variously reported—none make it less than 1500 (killed & wounded) & many estimate it much larger. Genl. Agnew of theirs was certainly killed—many officers wounded among whom some of distinction. This we certainly know, that the Hospital at Philadelphia & several large Meeting

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Houses, are filled with their wounded besides private Houses with the Horses. In a word, it was a bloody day. Would to Heaven I could add, that it had been a more fortunate one for us.

Our distress on acct. of Cloathing is great, and in a little time must be very sensibly felt, unless some expedient can be hit upon to obtain them. We have since the Battle got in abt. 1200 Militia from Virginia—about the same number have gone off from this State and Jersey but others are promised in lieu of them—with truth however it may be said, that this State acts most infamously, the People of it, I mean, as we derive little or no assistance, from them. In short they are, in a manner, totally, disaffected, or in a kind of Lethargy.

The Enemy are making vigorous efforts to remove the obstructions in the Delaware, and to possess themselves of the Works which have been constructed for the Defence of them.—I am doing all I can in my present situation to save them, God only knows which will succeed.

I very sincerely congratulate you on the change in your Family. Tell the young couple, after wishing them joy of their union, that it is my sincere hope, that it will be as happy and lasting as their present joys are boundless. The Enclosed Letter of thanks to my sister for her elegant present you will please to deliver; and with sincere affection for you all, I am, &c.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On Burgoyne's Surrender

To Major-General Putnam

CAMP, 20 MILES FROM PHILA.,
19 October, 1777.

Dear Sir: The defeat of General Burgoyne is a most important event, and such as must afford the highest satisfaction to every well-affected American breast. Should Providence be pleased to crown our arms in the course of the campaign with one more fortunate stroke, I think we shall have no great cause for anxiety respecting the future designs of Britain. I trust all will be well in His good time.

I am extremely sorrow for the death of Mrs. Putnam, and sympathize with you upon the occasion. Remembering that all must die, and that she had lived to an honorable age, I hope you will bear the misfortune with that fortitude and complacency of mind, that become a man and a Christian.

A Call to Arms

To the Officers and Soldiers of the Militia in the Counties of Hunterdon, Burlington, Gloucester, Salem, and Cumberland

20 November, 1777.

Friends and Fellow Soldiers: The Enemy have thrown considerable force into your State with intent to possess themselves of the post at Red Bank and after clearing the obstructions in the Delaware make incursions into your country.—To prevent them from effecting either of these purposes I have sent over a number of Continental Troops as I trust will, with the spirited operations of the militia

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totally defeat their designs and oblige them to return to the City and suburbs of Philadelphia which is the only ground they possess on the Pennsylvania Shore, in which they cannot subsist cut off from the supplies of the plentiful State of New Jersey. I therefore call upon you, by all that you hold dear to rise up as one man and rid your country of its unjust invaders. To convince you that is to be done by a general appearance of all its freemen armed and ready to give their opposition, I need only to put you in mind of the effect it had upon the British Army in June last, who laid aside their intention of marching through the upper part of your State upon seeing the hostile manner in which you were prepared to receive them. Look also at the glorious effects which followed the spirit of the union which appeared among our brethren of New York and New England, who, by the brave assistance they afforded the Continental Army obliged a royal one, flushed with their former victories to sue for terms and lay down their arms in the most submissive manner.

Reflect upon these things, and I am convinced that every man who can bear a musket will take it up and without respect to time or place give his services in the field for a few weeks, perhaps only a few days. I am your sincere friend and countryman.

On the Impossibility of Answering Expectations

To Major-General Greene

26 November, 1777.

My letter of yesternight (wrote after I returned from a view of the enemy's lines from the other side Schuyl-

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kill) I must refer to. Our situation, as you justly observe, is distressing from a variety of irremediable causes, but more especially from the impracticability of answering the expectations of the world without running hazards which no military principles can justify, and which, in case of failure, might prove the ruin of our cause; patience, and a steady perseverance in such measures as appear warranted by sound reason and policy, must support us under the censure of the one, and dictate a proper line of conduct for the attainment of the other; that is the great object in view. This, as it ever has, will I think, ever remain the first wish of my heart, however I may mistake the means of accomplishment; that your views are the same, and that your endeavors have pointed to the same end, I am perfectly satisfied of, although you seem to have imbibed a suspicion which I never entertained.

On the Army at Valley Forge

To the President of Congress

VALLEY FORGE, 23 December, 1777.

Sir: Full as I was in my representation of the matters in the commissary's department yesterday, fresh and more powerful reasons, oblige me to add, that I am now convinced beyond a doubt, that, unless some great and capital change suddenly takes in that line, this army must inevitably be reduced to one or other of these three things; starve, dissolve, or disperse in order to obtain subsistence in the best manner they can. Rest assured, Sir, this is not an exaggerated picture, and that I have abundant reason to suppose what I say.

Yesterday afternoon, receiving information that the

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enemy in force had left the city, and were advancing towards Derby with the apparent design to forage, and draw subsistence from that part of the country, I ordered the troops to be in readiness, that I might give every opposition in my power; when behold, to my great mortification, I was not only informed, but convinced, that the men were unable to stir on account of provision, and that a dangerous mutiny, begun the night before, and which with difficulty was suppressed by the spirited exertions of some officers, was still much to be apprehended for want of this article. This brought forth the only commissary in the purchasing line in this camp; and, with him, this melancholy and alarming truth, that he had not a single hoof of any kind to slaughter, and not more than twenty-five barrels of flour! From hence form an opinion of our situation when I add, that he could not tell when to expect any.

All I could do under these circumstances, was to send out a few light parties to watch and harass the enemy, whilst other parties were instantly detached different ways to collect, if possible, as much provision as would satisfy the present pressing wants of the soldiery. But will this answer? No, Sir; three or four days of bad weather would prove our destruction. What then is to become of the army this winter? And if we are so often without provisions now, what is to become of us in the spring, when our force will be collected, with the aid perhaps of militia to take advantage of an early campaign, before the enemy can be reinforced?

These are considerations of great magnitude, meriting the closest attention; and they will, when my own reputation is so intimately connected with the event and to be affected by it, justify my saying, that the present commissaries are by no means equal to the execution of the office, or that the disaffection of the people is past all belief. The

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misfortune, however, does in my opinion proceed from both causes; and, though I have been tender heretofore of giving any opinion, or lodging complaints, as the change in that department took place contrary to my judgment, and the consequences thereof were predicted; yet, finding that the inactivity of the army, whether for want of provisions, clothes, or other essentials, is charged to my account, not only by the common vulgar but by those in power, it is time to speak plain in exculpation of myself. With truth, then, I can declare, that no man in my opinion ever had his measures more impeded than I have, by every department of the army.

Since the month of July we have had no assistance from the quartermaster-general, and to want of assistance from this department the commissary-general charges great part of his deficiency. To this I am to add, that, notwithstanding it is a standing order, and often repeated, that the troops shall always have two days provisions by them, that they might be ready at any sudden call; yet an opportunity has scarcely ever offered, of taking an advantage of the enemy, that has not been either totally obstructed, or greatly impeded, on this account. And this, the great and crying evil, is not all. The soap, vinegar, and other articles allowed by Congress, we see none of, nor have we seen them, I believe, since the battle of Brandywine. The first, indeed, we have now little occasion for; few men having more than one shirt, many only the moiety of one, and some none at all. In addition to which, as a proof of the little benefit received from a clothier-general, and as a further proof of the inability of an army, under the circumstances of this, to perform the common duties of soldiers, (besides a number of men confined to hospitals for want of shoes, and others in farmers' houses on the same account,) we have, by a field-return this day made, no less than two

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thousand eight hundred and ninety-eight men now in camp unfit for duty, because they are barefoot and otherwise naked. By the same return it appears, that our whole strength in Continental troops, including the eastern brigades, which have joined us since the surrender of General Burgoyne, exclusive of the Maryland troops sent to Wilmington, amounts to no more than eight thousand two hundred in camp fit for duty; notwithstanding which, and that since the 4th instant, our numbers fit for duty, from the hardships and exposures they have undergone, particularly on account of blankets (numbers having been obliged, and still are, to sit up all night by fires, instead of taking comfortable rest in the natural and common way), have decreased near two thousand men.

We find gentlemen, without knowing whether the army was really going into winter-quarters or not (for I am sure no resolution of mine would warrant the Remonstrance), reprobating the measure as much as if they thought the soldiers were made of stocks or stones, and equally insensible of frost and snow; and moreover, as if they conceived it easily practicable for an inferior army, under the disadvantages I have described ours to be, which are no means exaggerated, to confine a superior one, in all respects well-appointed and provided for a winter's campaign, within the city of Philadelphia, and to cover from depredation and waste the States of Pennsylvania and Jersey. But what makes this matter still more extraordinary in my eye is, that these very gentlemen,—who were well apprized of the nakedness of the troops from ocular demonstration, who thought their own soldiers worse clad than others, and who advised me near a month ago to postpone the execution of a plan I was about to adopt, in consequence of a resolve of Congress for seizing clothes, under strong assurances that an ample supply would be

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collected in ten days agreeably to a decree of the State (not one article of which, by the by, is yet come to hand), —should think a winter's campaign, and the covering of these States from the invasion of an enemy, so easy and practicable a business. I can assure those gentlemen, that it is a much easier and less distressing thing to draw remonstrances in a comfortable room by a good fireside, than to occupy a cold, bleak hill, and sleep under frost and snow, without clothes or blankets. However, although they seem to have little feeling for the naked and distressed soldiers, I feel superabundantly for them, and, from my soul, I pity those miseries, which it is neither in my power to relieve or prevent.

It is for these reasons, therefore, that I have dwelt upon the subject; and it adds not a little to my other difficulties and distress to find, that much more is expected of me than is possible to be performed, and that upon the ground of safety and policy I am obliged to conceal the true state of the army from public view, and thereby expose myself to detraction and calumny. The honorable committee of Congress went from camp fully possessed of my sentiments respecting the establishment of this army, the necessity of auditors of accounts, the appointment of officers, and new arrangements. I have no need, therefore, to be prolix upon these subjects, but I refer to the committee. I shall add a word or two to show, first, the necessity of some better provision for binding the officers by the tie of interest to the service, as no day nor scarce an hour passes without the offer of a resigned commission; (otherwise I much doubt the practicability of holding the army together much longer, and in this I shall probably be thought the more sincere, when I freely declare, that I do not myself expect to derive the smallest benefit from any establishment that Congress may adopt, otherwise than as a member of

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the community at large in the good, which I am persuaded will result from the measure, by making better officers and better troops;) and, secondly, to point out the necessity of making the appointments and arrangements without loss of time. We have not more than three months, in which to prepare a great deal of business. If we let these slip or waste, we shall be laboring under the same difficulties all next campaign, as we have been this, to rectify mistakes and bring things to order.

Military arrangement, and movements in consequence, like the mechanism of a clock, will be imperfect and disordered by the want of a part. In a very sensible degree have I experienced this, in the course of the last summer, several brigades having no brigadiers appointed to them till late, and some not at all; by which means it follows, that an additional weight is thrown upon the shoulders of the Commander-in-chief, to withdraw his attention from the great line of his duty. The gentlemen of the committee, when they were at camp, talked of an expedient for adjusting these matters, which I highly approved and wish to see adopted; namely, that two or three members of the Board of War, or a committee of Congress, should repair immediately to camp, where the best aid can be had, and with the commanding officer, or a committee of his appointment, prepare and digest the most perfect plan, that can be devised, for correcting all abuses and making new arrangements; considering what is to be done with the weak and debilitated regiments, if the States to which they belong will not draft men to fill them, for as to enlisting soldiers it seems to me to be totally out of the question; together with many other things, that would occur in the course of such a conference; and, after digesting matters in the best manner they can, to submit the whole to the ultimate determination of Congress.

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If this measure is approved, I would earnestly advise the immediate execution of it, and that the commissary-general of purchases, whom I rarely see, may be directed to form magazines without a moment's delay in the neighborhood of this camp, in order to secure provision for us in case of bad weather. The quartermaster-general ought also to be busy in his department. In short, there is as much to be done in preparing for a campaign, as in the active part of it. Every thing depends upon the preparation that is made in the several departments, and the success or misfortunes of the next campaign will more than probably originate with our activity or supineness during this winter.

On Relations with General Conway

To the President of Congress

VALLEY FORGE, 2 January, 1778.

Sir: I take the liberty of transmitting to you the enclosed copies of a letter from me to General Conway, since his return from New York to camp, and of two letters from him to me, which you will be pleased to lay before Congress. I shall not in this letter animadvert upon them; but after making a single observation, submit the whole to Congress.

If General Conway means, by cool receptions, mentioned in the last paragraph of his letter of the 31st ultimo, that I did not receive him in the language of a warm and cordial friend, I readily confess the charge. I did not, nor shall I ever, till I am capable of the arts of dissimulation. These I despise, and my feelings will not permit me to make professions of friendship to the man I deem

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my enemy, and whose system of conduct forbids it. At the same time, truth authorizes me to say, that he was received and treated with proper respect to his official character, and that he has had no cause to justify the assertion, that he could not expect any support for fulfilling the duties of his appointment.

On the Discovery of the Conway Cabal

To Major General Gates

VALLEY FORGE, 4 January, 1778.

Sir: I am to inform you that Colo. Wilkinson, in his way to Congress in the month of October last fell in with Lord Stirling at Reading; and, not in confidence, that I ever understood, informed his Aid de Camp Majr. McWilliams that General Conway had written thus to you: "Heaven had been determined to save your Country; or a weak General and bad Counsellors would have ruined it." Lord Stirling from motives of friendship, transmitted the acct. with this remark: "The inclosed was communicated by Colonel Wilkinson to Majr. McWilliams. Such wicked duplicity of conduct I shall always think it my duty to detect."

In consequence of this information, and without having any thing more in view than merely to shew the Gentl. that I was not unapprized of his intriguing disposition, I wrote him a Letter in these words:

SIR—A Letter which I received last night contained the following paragraph.—In a Letter from Genl. Conway to Genl. Gates he says—heaven has been determined to save your country; or a weak General and bad counsellors would have ruined it. I am Sir, &c.

Neither this Letter, nor the information which occa-

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sioned it was ever, directly, or indirectly communicated by me to a single officer in this army (out of my own family,) excepting the Marquis de la Fayette, who, having been spoken to on the Subject by Genl. Conway, applied for, and saw, under injunctions of secrecy, the Letter which contained Wilkinson's information—so desirous was I of concealing every matter that could, in its consequences, give the smallest interruption to the tranquility of this army, or afford a gleam of hope to the enemy by dissensions therein.

Thus Sir, with an openness and candor which I hope will ever characterize and mark my conduct, have I complied with your request. The only concern I feel upon the occasion—finding how matters stand—is, that in doing this I have necessarily been obliged to name a Genln. whom I am persuaded (although I never exchanged a word with him upon the subject) thought he was rather doing an act of justice than committing on act of infidelity;—and sure I am, that, till Lord Stirling's Letter came to my hands I never knew that General Conway (who I viewed in the light of a stranger to you) was a correspondant of yours; much less did I suspect that I was the subject of your confidential Letters—

Pardon me then for adding, that so far from conceiving that the safety of the States can be affected, or in the smallest degree injured, by a discovery of this kind; or, that I should be called upon in such solemn terms to point out the author, that I considered the information as coming from yourself, and given with a friendly view to forewarn, and consequently forearm me, against a secret enemy, or in other words, a dangerous incendiary; in which character, sooner or later, this country will know Genl. Conway—But, in this, as in other matters of late, I have found myself mistaken.—

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His Country's Honor His Own

To Sir William Howe

HEAD-QUARTERS, 30 January, 1778.

Sir: There is one passage of your letter, which I cannot forbear taking particular notice of. No expression of personal politeness to me can be acceptable, accompanied by reflections on the representatives of a free people, under whose authority I have the honor to act. The delicacy I have observed, in refraining from every thing offensive in this way, entitled me to expect a similar treatment from you. I have not indulged myself in invective against the present rulers of Great Britain, in the course of our correspondence, nor will I even now avail myself of so fruitful a theme.

On the Intrigues against Washington

To Henry Laurens

VALLEY FORGE, 31 January, 1778.

Sir: I this morning received your favor of the 27th instant. I cannot sufficiently express the obligation I feel to you, for your friendship and politeness upon an occasion in which I am so deeply interested. I was not unapprized, that a malignant faction had been for some time forming to my prejudice; which, conscious as I am of having ever done all in my power to answer the important purposes of the trust reposed in me, could not but give me some pain on a personal account. But my chief concern arises from an apprehension of the dangerous conse-

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quences which intestine dissensions may produce to the common cause.

As I have no other view than to promote the public good, and am unambitious of honors not founded in the approbation of my country, I would not desire in the least degree to suppress a free spirit of inquiry into any part of my conduct, that even faction itself may deem reprehensible. The anonymous paper handed to you exhibits many serious charges, and it is my wish that it should be submitted to Congress. This I am the more inclined to, as the suppression or concealment may possibly involve you in embarrassments hereafter, since it is uncertain how many or who may be privy to the contents.

My enemies take an ungenerous advantage of me. They know the delicacy of my situation, and that motives of policy deprive me of the defence I might otherwise make against their insidious attacks. They know I cannot combat their insinuations, however injurious, without disclosing secrets, which it is of the utmost moment to conceal. But why should I expect to be exempt from censure, the unfailing lot of an elevated station? Merit and talents, with which I can have no pretensions of rivalry, have ever been subject to it. My heart tells me, that it has been my unremitted aim to do the best that circumstances would permit; yet I may have been very often mistaken in my judgment of the means, and may in many instances deserve the imputation of error. I cannot forbear repeating, that I have a grateful sense of the favorable disposition you have manifested to me in this affair, and beg you will believe me to be, with sentiments of real esteem and regard, Sir, &c.

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On the Character of General Conway

To Major-General Gates

HEADQUARTERS, VALLEY FORGE,

9 February, 1778.

Sir: It is greatly to be lamented, that this adept in military science did not employ his abilities in the progress of the campaign, in pointing out those wise measures, which were calculated to give us "that degree of success we might reasonably expect." The United States have lost much from that unseasonable diffidence, which prevented his embracing the numerous opportunities he had in Council, of displaying those rich treasures of knowledge and experience, he has since so freely laid open to you.—I will not do him the injustice to impute the penurious reserve which ever appeared in him upon such occasions to any other cause than an excess of modesty; neither will I suppose he possesses no other merit than of that after kind of sagacity, which qualifies a man better for profound discoveries of errors, that have been committed, and advantages that have been lost, than for the exercise of that foresight and provident discernment which enable him to avoid the one and anticipate the other.—But, willing as I am to subscribe to all his pretensions and to believe that his remarks on the operations of the campaign were very judicious, and that he has sagaciously descanted on many things that might have been done, I can not help being a little sceptical as to his ability, to have found out the means of accomplishing them, or to prove the sufficiency of those in our possession. These minutiae, I suspect, he did not think worth his attention, particularly as they might not be within the compass of *his views*.—

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Notwithstanding the hopeful presages, you are pleased to figure to yourself of General Conway's firm and constant friendship to America, I cannot persuade myself to retract the prediction concerning him, which you so emphatically wish had not been inserted in my last. A better acquaintance with him, than I have reason to think you have from what you say, and a concurrence of circumstances, obliged me to give him but little credit for the qualifications of his heart; of which, at least, I beg leave to assume the privilege of being a tolerable judge. Were it necessary, more instances than one might be adduced from his behavior and conversation, to manifest that he is capable of all the malignity of detraction, and all the meaness of intrigue, to gratify the absurd resentment of disappointed vanity, or to answer the purposes of personal aggrandizement and promote the interests of faction.

On the Sufferings of the Army

To Governor George Clinton

HEAD-QUARTERS VALLEY FORGE,
16 February, 1778.

Dear Sir: It is with great reluctance I trouble you on a subject, which does not properly fall within your province; but it is a subject that occasions me more distress, than I have felt since the commencement of the war; and which loudly demands the most zealous exertions of every person of weight and authority, who is interested in the success of our affairs; I mean the present dreadful situation of the army for want of provisions, and the miserable prospects before us with respect to futurity. It is more alarming, than you will probably conceive; for, to form a

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just idea, it were necessary to be on the spot. For some days past, there has been little less than a famine in camp. A part of the army has been a week without any kind of flesh, and the rest three or four days. Naked and starving as they are, we cannot enough admire the incomparable patience and fidelity of the soldiery, that they have not been ere this excited by their sufferings to a general mutiny and dispersion. Strong symptoms, however, of discontent have appeared in particular instances; and nothing but the most active efforts everywhere can long avert so shocking a catastrophe.

On the Conduct of Great Britain

To Bryan Fairfax

VALLEY FORGE, 1 March, 1778.

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 8th of December came safe to my hands, after a considerable delay on its passage. The sentiments you have expressed to me in this letter are highly flattering, meriting my warmest acknowledgments, as I have too good an opinion of your sincerity and candor to believe that you are capable of unmeaning professions, and speaking a language foreign to your heart. The friendship, which I ever professed and felt for you, met with no diminution from the difference in our political sentiments. I know the rectitude of my own intentions, and, believing in the sincerity of yours, lamented, though I did not condemn, your renunciation of the creed I had adopted. Nor do I think any person or power ought to do it, whilst your conduct is not opposed to the general interest of the people, and the measures they are pursuing; the latter, that is, our actions, depending

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upon ourselves, may be controlled, while the powers of thinking, originating in higher causes, cannot always be moulded to our wishes.

The determinations of Providence are always wise, often inscrutable; and, though its decrees appear to bear hard upon us at times, is nevertheless meant for gracious purposes. In this light I cannot help viewing your late disappointment; for if you had been permitted to have gone to England, unrestrained even by the rigid oaths, which are administered on those occasions, your feelings as a husband, parent &c, must have been considerably wounded in the prospect of a long, perhaps lasting, separation from your nearest relatives. What then must they have been, if the obligation of an oath had left you without a will? Your hope of being instrumental in restoring peace would prove as unsubstantial, as mist before the noon-day's sun, and would as soon dispel; for, believe me, Sir, Great Britain understood herself perfectly well in this dispute, but did not comprehend America. She meant, as Lord Camden, in his late speech in Parliament, clearly and explicitly declared, to drive America into rebellion, that her own purposes might be more fully answered by it; but take this along with it, that this plan originated in a firm belief, founded on misinformation, that no effectual opposition would or could be made. They little dreamt of what has happened, and are disappointed in their views.

Does not every act of Administration, from the Tea Act to the present session of Parliament, declare this in plain and self-evident characters? Had the commissioners any power to treat with America? If they meant peace, would Lord Howe have been detained in England five months after passing the act? Would the powers of these commissioners have been confined to mere acts of grace, upon condition of absolute submission? No! surely, no! They

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meant to drive us into what they termed rebellion, that they might be furnished with a pretext to disarm, and then strip us of the rights and privileges of Englishmen and citizens.

If they were actuated by the principles of justice, why did they refuse indignantly to accede to the terms, which were humbly supplicated before hostilities commenced, and this country deluged in blood; and now make their principal officers, and even the commissioners themselves, say that these terms are just and reasonable; nay, that more will be granted, than we have yet asked, if we will relinquish our claim to independency? What name does such conduct as this deserve? And what punishment is there in store for the men, who have distressed millions, involved thousands in ruin, and plunged numberless families in inextricable woe? Could that, which is just and reasonable now, have been unjust four years ago? If not, upon what principles, I say, does Administration act? They must either be wantonly wicked and cruel, or (which is only another mode of describing the same thing) under false colors are now endeavoring to deceive the great body of the people, by industriously propagating a belief, that Great Britain is willing to offer any, and that we will accept of no terms; thereby hoping to poison and disaffect the minds of those, who wish for peace, and create feuds and dissensions among ourselves. In a word, having less dependence now in their arms than their arts, they are practising such low and dirty tricks, that men of sentiment and honor must blush at their villainy. Among other manoeuvres in this way, they are counterfeiting letters, and publishing them as intercepted ones of mine, to prove that I am an enemy to the present measures, and have been led into them step by step, still hoping that Congress would recede from their present claims.

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A Letter of Courtesy

To Lieutenant-General Burgoyne

HEAD-QUARTERS, 11 March, 1778.

Sir: I was only two days since honored with your very obliging letter of the 11th of February. Your indulgent opinion of my character, and the polite terms in which you are pleased to express it, are peculiarly flattering; and I take pleasure in the opportunity you have afforded me, of assuring you, that, far from suffering the views of national opposition to be embittered and debased by personal animosity, I am ever ready to do justice to the merit of the man and soldier, and to esteem where esteem is due, however the idea of a public enemy may interpose. You will not think it the language of unmeaning ceremony, if I add, that sentiments of personal respect, in the present instance, are reciprocal.

Viewing you in the light of an officer, contending against what I conceive to be the rights of my country, the reverses of fortune you experienced in the field cannot be unacceptable to me; but abstracted from considerations of national advantage, I can sincerely sympathize with your feelings as a soldier, the unavoidable difficulties of whose situation forbid his success; and as a man, whose lot combines the calamity of ill health, the anxieties of captivity, and the painful sensibility for a reputation exposed, where he most values it, to the assaults of malice and detraction.

As your aid-de-camp went directly to Congress, the business of your letter to me had been decided before it came to hand. I am happy that their cheerful acquiescence with your request prevented the necessity of my intervention; and wishing you a safe and agreeable passage, with a per-

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fect restoration of your health, I have the honor to be, very respectfully, &c.

On the Intrigue against Washington

To Patrick Henry

VALLEY FORGE, 27 March, 1778.

Dear Sir: About eight days ago I was honored with your favor of the 20th ultimo. Your friendship, Sir, in transmitting to me the anonymous letter you had received, lays me under the most grateful obligations, and if my acknowledgments can be due for any thing more, it is for the polite and delicate terms in which you have been pleased to communicate the matter.

I have ever been happy in supposing that I had a place in your esteem, and the proof you have afforded on this occasion makes me peculiarly so. The favorable light in which you hold me is truly flattering; but I should feel much regret, if I thought the happiness of America so intimately connected with my personal welfare, as you so obligingly seem to consider it. All I can say is, that she has ever had, and I trust she ever will have, my honest exertions to promote her interest. I cannot hope that my services have been the best; but my heart tells me they have been the best that I could render.

That I may have erred in using the means in my power for accomplishing the objects of the arduous, exalted station with which I am honored, I cannot doubt; nor do I wish my conduct to be exempted from reprehension farther than it may deserve. Error is the portion of humanity, and to censure it, whether committed by this or that public character, is the prerogative of freemen. However, being

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intimately acquainted with the man I conceive to be the author of the letter transmitted, and having always received from him the strongest professions of attachment and regard, I am constrained to consider him as not possessing, at least, a great degree of candor and sincerity, though his views in addressing you should have been the result of conviction, and founded in motives of public good. This is not the only secret, insidious attempt, that has been made to wound my reputation. There have been others equally base, cruel, and ungenerous, because conducted with as little frankness, and proceeding from views, perhaps, as personally interested. I am, dear Sir, with great esteem and regard, your much obliged friend, &c.

On Half Pay for the Officers

To the President of Congress

VALLEY FORGE, 10 April, 1778.

Sir: It may be said by some, Sir, that my wish to see the officers of this army upon a more respectable establishment is the cause of my solicitude, and carries me too far. If my opinion is asked with respect to the necessity of making this provision for the officers, I am ready to declare, that I do most religiously believe the salvation of the cause depends upon it, and, without it, your officers will moulder to nothing, or be composed of low and illiterate men, void of capacity for this or any other business. To prove this, I can with truth aver, that scarce a day passes without the offer of two or three commissions; and my advices from the Eastward and Southward are, that numbers who had gone home on furlough mean not to return, but are establishing themselves in more lucrative em-

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ployments. Let Congress determine what will be the consequence of this spirit.

Personally, as an officer, I have no interest in their decision, because I have declared, and I now repeat it, that I never will receive the smallest benefit from the half-pay establishment; but, as a man who fights under the weight of a proscription, and as a citizen, who wishes to see the liberty of his country established upon a permanent foundation, and whose property depends upon the success of our arms, I am deeply interested. But, all this apart, and justice out of the question, upon the single ground of economy and public saving, I will maintain the utility of it; for I have not the least doubt, that, until officers consider their commissions in an honorable and interested point of view, and are afraid to endanger them by negligence and inattention, that no order, regularity, or care, either of the men or Public property, will prevail. To prove this, I need only refer to the General Courts-Martial, which are constantly sitting for the trial of them, and the number who have been cashiered within the last three months for misconduct of different kinds.

On the Policy of Congress

To John Banister, Delegate in Congress

VALLEY FORGE, 21 April, 1778.

Dear Sir: I thank you very much for your obliging tender of a friendly intercourse between us; and you may rest assured that I embrace it with cheerfulness, and shall write you freely, as often as leisure will permit, of such points as appear to me material and interesting. I am pleased to find, that you expect the proposed establish-

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ment of the army will succeed; though is it a painful consideration, that matters of such pressing importance and obvious necessity meet with so much difficulty and delay. Be assured, the success of the measure is a matter of the most serious moment, and that it ought to be brought to a conclusion as speedily as possible. The spirit of resigning commissions has been long at an alarming height, and increases daily. Applications from officers on furlough are hourly arriving and Genls. Heath at Boston—McDoughall on the north River and Mason of Virginia are asking what they are to do with the applicants to them.

The Virginia line has sustained a violent shock in this instance. Not less than ninety have already resigned to me. The same conduct has prevailed among the officers from the other States, though not yet to so considerable a degree; and there are but too just grounds to fear, that it will shake the very existence of the army, unless a remedy is soon, very soon, applied. There is none, in my opinion so effectual as the one pointed out. This, I trust, will satisfy the officers, and at the same time it will produce no present additional emission of money. They will not be persuaded to sacrifice all views of present interest, and encounter the numerous vicissitudes of war, in the defence of their country, unless she will be generous enough on her part to make a decent provision for their future support. I do not pronounce absolutely, that we shall have no army if the establishment fails, but the army we may have will be without discipline, without energy, incapable of acting with vigor, and destitute of those cements necessary to promise success on the one hand, or to withstand the shocks of adversity on the other. It is indeed hard to say how extensive the evil may be, if the measure should be rejected, or much longer delayed. I find it a very arduous task to keep the officers in tolerable humor,

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and to protract such a combination in quitting the service, as might possibly undo us for ever.

The difference between our service and that of the enemy is very striking. With us, from the peculiar, unhappy situation of things, the officer, a few instances excepted, must break in upon his private fortune for present support, without a prospect of future relief. With them, even companies are esteemed so honorable and so valuable, that they have sold of late from fifteen to twenty-two hundred pounds sterling; and I am credibly informed, that four thousand guineas have been given for a troop of dragoons. You will readily determine how this difference will operate; what effects it must produce. Men may speculate as they will; they may talk of patriotism; they may draw a few examples from ancient story, of great achievements performed by its influence; but whoever builds upon them, as a sufficient basis for conducting a long and bloody war, will find themselves deceived in the end. We must take the passions of men as nature has given them, and those principles as a guide, which are generally the rule of action. I do not exclude altogether the idea of patriotism. I know it exists, and I know it has done much in the present contest. But I will venture to assert, that a great and lasting war can never be supported on this principle alone. It must be aided by a prospect of interest, or some reward. For a time it may, of itself, push men to action, to bear much, to encounter difficulties; but it will not endure unassisted by interest.

The necessity of putting the army upon a respectable footing, both as to numbers and constitution, is now become more essential than ever. The enemy are beginning to play a game more dangerous, than their efforts by arms (though these will not be remitted in the smallest degree), and which threatens a fatal blow to the independence of

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America, and to her liberties of course. They are endeavoring to ensnare the people by specious allurements of peace. It is not improbable they have had such abundant cause to be tired of the war, that they may be sincere in the terms they offer, which, though far short of our pretensions, will be extremely flattering to minds, that do not penetrate far into political consequences; but, whether they are sincere or not, they may be equally destructive; for, to discerning men nothing can be more evident, than that a peace on the principles of dependence however limited, after what has happened, would be to the last degree dishonorable and ruinous. It is however much to be apprehended, that the idea of such an event will have a very powerful effect upon the country, and if not combated with the greatest address will serve, at least, to produce supineness and disunion. Men are naturally fond of peace, and there are symptoms which may authorize an opinion, that the people of America are pretty generally weary of the present war. It is doubtful, whether many of our friends might not incline to an accommodation on the grounds held out; or which may be, rather than persevere in a contest for independence. If this is the case, it must surely be the truest policy to strengthen the army, and place it upon a substantial footing. This will conduce to inspire the country with confidence; enable those at the head of affairs to consult the public honor and interest, notwithstanding the defection of some and temporary inconsistency and irresolution of others, who may desire to compromise the dispute; and, if a treaty should be deemed expedient, will put it in their power to insist upon better terms, than they could otherwise expect.

Besides the most vigorous exertions at home to increase and establish our military force upon a good basis, it appears to me advisable, that we should immediately

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try the full extent of our interest abroad, and bring our European negotiations to an issue. I think France must have ratified our independence, and will declare war immediately, on finding that serious proposals of accommodation are made; but lest, from a mistaken policy or too exalted an opinion of our power from the representations she has had, she should still remain indecisive, it were to be wished, proper persons were instantly despatched, or our envoys already there instructed to insist pointedly on her coming to a final determination. It cannot be fairly supposed, that she will hesitate a moment to declare war, if she is given to understand, in a proper manner, that a reunion of the two countries may be the consequence of procrastination. A European war and a European alliance would effectually answer our purposes. If the step I now mention should be eligible, despatches ought to be sent at once by different conveyances, for fear of accidents. I confess, it appears to me a measure of this kind could not but be productive of the most salutary consequences. If possible, I should also suppose it absolutely necessary to obtain good intelligence from England, pointing out the true springs of this manoeuvre of ministry; the preparations of force they are making; the prospects there are of raising it; the amount, and when it may be expected.

It really seems to me, from a comprehensive view of things, that a period is fast approaching, big with events of the most interesting importance; when the counsels we pursue, and the part we act, may lead decisively to liberty or to slavery. Under this idea, I cannot but regret that inactivity, that inattention, that want of something, which unhappily I have but too often experienced in our public affairs. I wish that our representation in Congress was complete and full from every State, and that it was formed of the first abilities among us. Whether we continue to

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war or proceed to negotiate, the wisdom of America in council cannot be too great. Our situation will be truly delicate. To enter into a negotiation too hastily, or to reject it altogether, may be attended with consequences equally fatal. The wishes of the people, seldom founded in deep disquisitions, or resulting from other reasonings than their present feelings, may not entirely accord with our true policy and interest. If they do not, to observe a proper line of conduct for promoting the one, and avoiding offence to the other, will be a work of great difficulty.

Nothing short of independence, it appears to me, can possibly do. A peace on other terms would, if I may be allowed the expression, be a peace of war. The injuries we have received from the British nation were so unprovoked, and have been so great and so many, that they can never be forgotten. Besides the feuds, the jealousies, the animosities, that would ever attend a union with them; besides the importance, the advantages, we should derive from an unrestricted commerce; our fidelity as a people, our gratitude, our character as men, are opposed to a coalition with them as subjects, but in case of the last extremity. Were we easily to accede to terms of dependence, no nation, upon future occasions, let the oppressions of Britain be never so flagrant and unjust, would interpose for our relief; or, at most, they would do it with a cautious reluctance, and upon conditions most probably that would be hard, if not dishonorable to us. France, by her supplies, has saved us from the yoke thus far; and a wise and virtuous perseverance would, and I trust will, free us entirely.

I have sent Congress Lord North's speech, and the two bills offered by him to Parliament. They are spreading fast through the country, and will soon become a subject of general notoriety. I therefore think they had best be

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published in our papers, and persons of leisure and ability set to work to counteract the impressions they may make on the minds of the people.

Before I conclude, there are one or two points more, upon which I will add an observation or two. The first is, the indecision of Congress and the delay used in coming to determinations in matters referred to them. This is productive of a variety of inconveniences; and an early decision, in many cases, though it should be against the measure submitted, would be attended with less pernicious effects. Some new plan might then be tried; but, while the matter is held in suspense, nothing can be attempted. The other point is, the *jealousy*, which Congress unhappily entertain of the army, and which, if reports are right, some members labor to establish. You may be assured, there is nothing more injurious, or more unjustly founded. This jealousy stands upon the commonly received opinion, which under proper limitations is certainly true, that standing armies are dangerous to a State, and from forming the same conclusion of the component parts of all, though they are totally dissimilar in their nature. The prejudices in other countries have only gone to them in time of *peace*, and these from their not having in general cases any of the ties, the concerns, or interests of citizens, or any other dependence, than what flowed from their military employ; in short, from their being mercenaries, hirelings. It is our policy to be prejudiced against them in time of *war*; & though they are citizens, having all the ties and interests of citizens, and in most cases property totally unconnected with the military line.

If we would pursue a right system of policy, in my opinion, there should be none of these distinctions. We should all be considered, Congress and army, as one people, embarked in one cause, in one interest; acting on the same

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principle, and to the same end. The distinction, the jealousies set up, or perhaps only incautiously let out, can answer not a single good purpose. They are impolitic in the extreme. Among individuals the most certain way to make a man your enemy is to tell him you esteem him such. So with public bodies; and the very jealousy, which the narrow politics of some may affect to entertain of the army, in order to a due subordination to the supreme civil authority, is a likely mean to produce a contrary effect; to incline it to the pursuit of those measures, which they may wish it to avoid. It is unjust, because no order of men in the Thirteen States has paid a more sanctimonious regard to their proceedings than the army; and indeed it may be questioned whether there has been that scrupulous adherence had to them by any other, for without arrogance or the smallest deviation from truth it may be said that no history now extant can furnish an instance of an army's suffering such uncommon hardships as ours has done, and bearing them with the same patience and fortitude. To see men, without clothes to cover their nakedness, without blankets to lie on, without shoes, by which their marches might be traced by blood from their feet, and almost as often without provisions as with them, marching through the frost and snow, and at Christmas taking up their winter-quarters within a day's march of the enemy, without a house or hut to cover them, till they could be built, and submitting to it without a murmur, is a proof of patience and obedience, which in my opinion can scarce be paralleled.

There may have been some remonstrances or applications to Congress, in the style of complaint, from the army, and slaves indeed should we be, if this privilege were denied, on account of their proceedings in particular instances; but these will not authorize nor even excuse a

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jealousy, that they are therefore aiming at unreasonable powers, or making strides dangerous or subversive of civil authority. Things should not be viewed in that light, more especially as Congress in some cases have relieved the injuries complained of, & which had flowed from their own acts. I refer you to my letter to yourself and Colo. Lee which accompanies this upon the subject of money for such of the old Virginia troops as have or may reinlist.

In respect to the volunteer plan, I scarce know what opinion to give at this time. The propriety of a requisition on this head will depend altogether on our operations. Such kind of troops should not be called for, but upon the spur of the occasion, and at the moment of executing an enterprise. They will not endure a long service; and, of all men in the military line, they are the most impatient of restraint and necessary government.

As the propositions, and the speech of Lord North must be founded in the despair of the nation of succeeding against us; or from a rupture in Europe, that has actually happened, or certainly will happen; or from some deep political manoeuvre; or from what I think still more likely, a composition of the whole, would it not be good policy, in this day of uncertainty and distress to the Tories, to avail ourselves of the occasion, and for the several States to hold out pardon, &c., to all delinquents returning by a certain day? They are frightened, and this is the time to operate upon them. Upon a short consideration of the matter, it appears to me, that such a measure would detach the Tories from the enemy, and bring things to a much speedier conclusion, and of course be a mean of saving much public treasure.

I will now be done and I trust that you excuse, not only the length of my letter, but the freedom with which I have delivered my sentiments in the course of it upon several

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occasions. The subjects struck me as important and interesting, and I have only to wish, that they may appear to you in the same light.

A Letter of Information

To Landon Carter

VALLEY FORGE, 30 May, 1778.

My dear Sir: I thank you much for your kind and affectionate remembrance and mention of me, and for that solicitude for my welfare, which breathes through the whole of your letters. Were I not warm in my acknowledgments for your distinguished regard, I should feel that sense of ingratitude, which I hope will never constitute a part of my character, nor find a place in my bosom. My friends therefore may believe me sincere in my professions of attachment to them, whilst Providence has a joint claim to my humble and grateful thanks, for its protection and direction of me, through the many difficult and intricate scenes, which this contest hath produced; and for the constant interposition in our behalf, when the clouds were heaviest and seemed ready to burst upon us.

To paint the distresses and perilous situation of this army in the course of last winter, for want of cloaths, provisions, and almost every other necessary, essential to the well-being, (I may say existence,) of an army, would require more time and an abler pen than mine; nor, since our prospects have so miraculously brightened, shall I attempt it, or even bear it in remembrance, further than as a memento of what is due to the great Author of all the care and good, that have been extended in relieving us in difficulties and distress.

The accounts which you had received of the accession

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of Canada to the Union were premature. It is a measure much to be wished, and I believe would not be displeasing to the body of that people; but, while Carleton remains among them, with three or four thousand regular troops, they dare not avow their sentiments, (if they really are favorable,) without a strong support. Your ideas of its importance to our political union coincide exactly with mine. If that country is not with us, it will, from its proximity to the eastern States, its intercourse and connexion with the numerous tribes of western Indians, its communion with them by water and other local advantages, be at least a troublesome if not a dangerous neighbor to us; and ought, at all events, to be in the same interests and politics, of the other States.

With great truth I think I can assure you, that the information you received from a gentleman at Sabine Hall, respecting a disposition in the northern officers to see me superseded in my command by General G——s is without the least foundation. I have very sufficient reasons to think, that no officers in the army are more attached to me, than those from the northward, and of those, none more so than the gentlemen, who were under the immediate command of G——s last campaign. That there was a scheme of this sort on foot, last fall, admits of no doubt; but it originated in another quarter; with three men, who wanted to aggrandize themselves; but finding no support, on the contrary, that their conduct and views, when seen into, were likely to undergo severe reprehension, they slunk back, disavowed the measure, and professed themselves my warmest admirers. Thus stands the matter at present. Whether any members of Congress were privy to this scheme, and inclined to aid and abet it, I shall not take upon me to say; but am well informed, that no whisper of the kind was ever heard in Congress.

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The draughts of bills as mentioned by you, and which have since passed into acts of British legislation, are so strongly marked with folly and villany, that one can scarce tell which predominates, or how to be surprised at any act of a British minister. This last trite performance of Master North's is neither more nor less than an insult to common sense, and shows to what extremity of folly wicked men in a bad cause are sometimes driven; for this rude Boreas, who was to bring America to his feet, knew at the time of draughting these bills, or had good reason to believe, that a treaty had actually been signed between the court of France and the United States. By what rule of common sense, then, he could expect that such an undisguised artifice would go down in America I cannot conceive. But, thanks to Heaven, the tables are turned; and we, I hope, shall have our independence secured, in its fullest extent, without cringing to this Son of Thunder, who I am persuaded will find abundant work for his troops elsewhere; on which happy prospect I sincerely congratulate you and every friend to American liberty.

I am sorry it is not in my power to furnish you with the letter required, which, (with many others,) was written to show, that I was an enemy to independence, and with a view to create distrust and jealousy. I never had but one of them, and that I sent to Mrs. Washington, to let her see what obliging folks there were in the world. As a sample of it, I enclose you another letter, written for me to Mr. Custis, of the same tenor, and which I happen to have by me. It is no easy matter to decide, whether the villany or artifice of these letters is greatest. They were written by a person, who had some knowledge or information of the component parts of my family, and yet so deficient in circumstances and facts, as to run into egregious misrepresentations of both.

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I have spun out a long letter, and send it to you in very slovenly manner; but, not having time to give it with more fairness, and flattering myself into a belief, that you had rather receive it in this dress than not at all, I shall make no other apology for the interlineations and scratches you will find in it, than you will please to allow my hurried situation.

Against a Policy of Proscription

To the President of Congress

VALLEY FORGE, 2 June, 1778.

Sir: I sincerely wish the Legislatures of the several States had passed Laws, adopting the generous policy, recommended by Congress in their Resolution of the 23d of April. I am assured, by authority not to be questioned, that for want of this, Hundreds nay Thousands of people, and among them many valuable artizans, with large quantities of goods will be forced from Philadelphia, who otherwise would willingly remain. From report, their reluctance and distress upon this occasion, are scarcely to be paralleled. There are a few, whose conduct has been such, that no assurances of security, I presume, could induce them to stay; and their departure, compelled and founded as it were in the approbation of their own consciences, would answer all the purposes of example, especially if followed by a confiscation of the property. A proscribing system, or Laws having the same effect, when carried to a great extent, ever appeared to me to be impolitic; and their operation should always cease with the causes, which produced them. Examples, in terrorem are necessary, but to exile many of its Inhabitants cannot be the interest of any State.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

The Battle of Monmouth

To John Augustine Washington

BRUNSWIC, IN NEW JERSEY, 4 July, 1778.

Dear Brother: Before this will have reached you, the account of the battle of Monmouth will probably get to you; which, from an unfortunate and bad beginning, ended out a glorious and happy day. General Lee, having the command of the van of the army, consisting of five thousand chosen men, was ordered to begin to attack in the morning, so soon as the enemy began their march; to be supported by me; but, strange to tell! when he came up with the enemy, a retreat commenced; whether by his order, or from other causes, is now the subject of inquiry, and consequently improper to be descanted upon, as he is in arrest, and a court-martial sitting for trial of him. A retreat, however, was the fact, be the causes as they may; and the disaster arising from it would have proved fatal to the army, were it not that bountiful Providence, which has never failed me in the hour of distress, enabled me to form a regiment of two (of those that were retreating) in the face of the enemy and under their fire; by which means a stand was made long enough (the place through which the enemy were pursuing being narrow, to form the troops, that were standing upon an advantageous piece of ground in the rear). Here our affairs took a favorable turn, and, from being pursued, we drove the enemy back over the ground they had followed, and recovered the field of battle, and possessed ourselves of their dead. But as they retreated into a morass very difficult to pass, and had both flanks covered with thick woods, it was found impracticable with men, fainting with fatigue, heat, and want of water, to

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do any thing more that night. In the morning we expected to renew the action; when, behold, the enemy had stole off as silent as a grave in the night, after having sent away their wounded. Getting a night's march of us, and having but ten miles to a strong post, it was judged inexpedient to follow them any further, but move towards the North River, lest they should have any design upon our posts there.

On the Results of Two Years of War

To Brigadier-General Nelson, Virginia

CAMP, AT THE WHITE PLAINS,
20 August, 1778.

My Dear Sir: It is not a little pleasing, nor less wonderful to contemplate, that after two years' manoeuvring and undergoing the strangest vicissitudes, that perhaps ever attended any one contest since the creation, both armies are brought back to the very point they set out from, and that which was the offending party in the beginning is now reduced to the use of the spade and pickaxe for defence. The hand of Providence has been so conspicuous in all this, that he must be worse than an infidel that lacks faith, and more than wicked, that has not gratitude enough to acknowledge his obligations. But it will be time enough for me to turn preacher, when my present appointment ceases; and therefore I shall add no more on the doctrine of Providence; but make a tender of my best respects to your good lady, the secretary, and other friends, and assure you, that, with the most perfect regard, I am, dear Sir, &c.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

An Appreciation of Lafayette

To Marquis de Lafayette

FREDERICKSBURG, 25 September, 1778.

My dear Marquis: The sentiments of affection and attachment, which breathe so conspicuously in all your letters to me, are at once pleasing and honorable, and afford me abundant cause to rejoice at the happiness of my acquaintance with you. Your love of liberty, the just sense you entertain of this valuable blessing, and your noble and disinterested exertions in the cause of it, added to the innate goodness of your heart, conspire to render you dear to me; and I think myself happy in being linked with you in bonds of the strictest friendship.

The ardent zeal, which you have displayed during the whole course of the campaign to the eastward, and your endeavors to cherish harmony among the officers of the allied powers, and to dispel those unfavorable impressions, which had begun to take place in the minds of the unthinking, (from misfortunes, which the utmost stretch of human foresight could not avert,) deserves, and now receives, my particular and warmest thanks. I am sorry for Monsieur Tousard's loss of an arm in the action on Rhode Island; and offer my thanks to him, through you, for his gallant behavior on that day.

Could I have conceived, that my picture had been an object of your wishes, or in the smallest degree worthy of your attention, I should, while Mr. Peale was in camp at Valley Forge, have got him to have taken the best portrait of me he could, and presented it to you; but I really had not so good an opinion of my own worth, as to suppose that such a compliment would not have been considered

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as a greater instance of my vanity, than a mean of your gratification; and, therefore, when you requested me to sit to Monsieur Lanfang, I thought it was only to obtain the outlines and a few shades of my features, to have some print struck from.

On the National Finances

To Gouverneur Morris

FISHKILL, 4 Oct., 1778.

Dear Sir: My public Letters to the President of Congress will inform you of the wind that wafted me to this place. Nothing more therefore need be said on that head. Your Letter of the 8th ulto. contains three questions and answers, to wit; Can the Enemy prosecute the war? Do they mean to stay on the Continent? And, is it our interest to put impediments in the way of their departure? To the first your answer in the negative. To the second you are decided in opinion, they do not. And to the third say clearly, No.

Much, my good Sir, may be said in favor of these answers, and *some* things against the two first of them. By way therefore of dissertation on the first, I will also beg leave to put a question and give it an answer. Can *we* carry on the war much longer? Certainly NO, unless some measures can be devised & speedily executed to restore the credit of our currency, restrain extortion, & punish forestallers. Without these can be effected, what funds can stand the present expenses of the army? And what officer can bear the weight of prices, that every necessary article is now got to? A Rat in the shape of a horse, is not to be bought at this time for less than £200; A Saddle under Thirty or Forty;—Boots twenty,—and shoes and other

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articles in the like proportion.—How is it possible, therefore, for officers to stand this without an increase of pay? and how is it possible to advance their Pay, when Flour is selling (at different places) from five to fifteen pounds pr cwt.,—Hay from ten to thirty pounds pr Tunn, and Beef & other essentials in this proportion?

The true point of light, then, to place & consider this matter is in, not simply whether Gt. Britain can carry on the war, but whose Finances, (theirs or ours,) is most likely to fail; which leads me to doubt very much the infallibility of the answer given to your second question, respecting the Enemy's leaving the Continent; for I believe they will not do it, while ever *hope* and the chapter of *accidents* can give them a *chance* of bringing us to terms short of *Independence*.—But this, *you* will perhaps say, they are now bereft of. *I* shall acknowledge that many things favor the idea; but add, that, upon a comparative view of circumstances, there is abundant matter to puzzle & confound the judgment. To your third answer I subscribe with hand and heart. The opening is now fair, and God grant that they may embrace the opportunity of bidding an eternal adieu to our (once quit of them) happy Land. If the Spaniards would but join their Fleets to those of France, & commence hostilities, my doubts would all subside. Without it, I fear the British Navy has it too much in its power to counteract the Schemes of France.

The high prices of every necessary; The little, indeed no benefit, which officers have derived from the intended bounty of Congress in the article of cloathing; The change in the establishment, by which so many of them are discontinued; the unfortunate delay of this business, which kept them too long in suspense, and set a number of evil spirits to work; The unsettled Rank, and contradictory modes of adjusting it,—with other causes, which might be

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enumerated have conspired to sour the temper of the army exceedingly; and has, I am told, been productive of a memorial or representation of some kind to Congress; which neither directly nor indirectly did I know or even hear was in agitation, till some days after it was despatched; owing as I apprehend, to the secrecy with which it was conducted to keep it from my knowledge, as I had in a similar instance last spring discountenanced and stifled a child of the same illegitimacy in its birth. If you have any news worth communicating, do not put it under a bushel, but give it to, dear Sir, yours sincerely, &c.

On the Dangers of a French Occupation of Canada

To Henry Laurens

FREDG., 14 NOV., 1778.

Dr. Sir: The question of the Canadian expedition, in the form it now stands, appears to me one of the most interesting that has hitherto agitated our national deliberations. I have one objection to it, untouched in my public letter, which is, in my estimation, insurmountable, and alarms all my feelings for the true and permanent interests of my country. This is the introduction of a large body of French troops into Canada, and putting them in possession of the capital of that Province, attached to them by all the ties of blood, habits, manners, religion, and former connexion of government. I fear this would be too great a temptation to be resisted by any power actuated by the common maxims of national policy. Let us realize for a moment the striking advantages France would derive from the possession of Canada; the acquisition of an ex-

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nsive territory, abounding in supplies for the use of her
lands; the opening a vast source of the most beneficial
commerce with the Indian nations, which she might then
monopolize; the having ports of her own on this continent
independent of the precarious good will of an ally; the
grossing of the whole trade of Newfoundland whenever
she pleased, the finest nursery of seamen in the world; the
security afforded to her Islands; and, finally, the facility
of raising and controlling these States, the natural and most
formidable rival of every maritime power in Europe.
Canada would be a solid acquisition to France on all these
accounts, and because of the numerous inhabitants, subjects
to her by inclination, who would aid in preserving it under
her power against the attempt of every other.

France, acknowledged for some time past the most
powerful monarchy in Europe by land, able now to dis-
pute the empire of the sea with Britain, and if joined with
Spain, I may say, certainly superior, possessed of New
Orleans on our right, Canada on our left, and seconded
by the numerous tribes of indians in our rear from one
extremity to the other, a people so generally friendly to
her, and whom she knows so well to conciliate, would, it is
much to be apprehended, have it in her power to give law
to these States.

Let us suppose, that, when the five thousand french
troops (and under the idea of that number twice as many
might be introduced), were entered the city of Quebec,
they should declare an intention to hold Canada, as a
pledge and surety for the debts due to France from the
United States, or, under other specious pretences, hold the
place till they can find a bone of contention, and, in the
mean while, should excite the Canadians to engage in sup-
porting their pretences & claims; what should we be able
to say, with only four or five thousand men to carry on the

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dispute? It may be supposed, that France would not choose to renounce our friendship by a step of this kind, as the consequences would be a reunion with England on some terms or other, and the loss of what she had acquired in so violent and unjustifiable a manner, with all the advantages of an alliance with us. This, in my opinion, is too slender a security against the measure, to be relied on. The truth of the position will entirely depend on naval events. If France and Spain should unite, and obtain a decided superiority by Sea, a reunion with England would avail very little, and might be set at defiance. France, with a numerous army at command, might throw in what number of land forces she thought proper, to support her pretensions; and England, without men, without money, and inferior on her favorite element, could give no effectual aid to oppose them. Resentment, reproaches, and submission seem to be all that would be left to us. Men are very apt to run into extremes. Hatred to England may carry some into excess of Confidence in France, especially when motives of gratitude are thrown into the scale. Men of this description would be unwilling to suppose France capable of acting so ungenerous a part. I am heartily disposed to entertain the most favorable sentiments of our new ally, and to cherish them in others to a reasonable degree. But it is maxim, founded on the universal experience of mankind, that no nation is to be trusted farther than it is bound by its interest; and no prudent statesman or politician will venture to depart from it. In our circumstances we ought to be particularly cautious; for we have not yet attained sufficient vigor and maturity to recover from the shock of any false step, into which we may unwarily fall.

If France should even engage in the scheme, in the first instance, with the purest intentions, there is the greatest

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danger that, in the progress of the business, invited to it by circumstances, and perhaps urged on by the solicitations and wishes of the Canadians, she would alter her views.

As the Marquis clothed his proposition, when he spoke it to me, it would seem to originate wholly with himself; but, it is far from impossible, that it had its birth in the Cabinet of France, and was put into this artful dress to give it readier currency. I fancy that I read in the countenances of some people, on this occasion, more than the disinterested zeal of allies. I hope I am mistaken, and that my fears of mischief make me refine too much, and awaken jealousies that have no sufficient foundation.

But upon the whole, Sir, to wave every other consideration, I do not like to add to the number of our national obligations. I would wish, as much as possible, to avoid giving a foreign power new claims of merit for services performed to the United States, and would ask no assistance that is not indispensable.

On the Weakness of Congress

*To Benjamin Harrison, Speaker of the House of Delegates
of Virginia*

PHILA., 30 December, 1778.

My dear Sir: I have seen nothing since I came here (on the 22d Inst.) to change my opinion of Men or Measrs., but abundant reason to be convinced that our affairs are in more distressed, ruinous, and deplorable condition than they have been in since the commencement of the War.—By a faithful laborer then in the cause—By a Man who is daily injuring his private Estate without even the smallest earthly advantage not common

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to all in case of a favorable Issue to the dispute—By one who wishes the prosperity of America most devoutly and sees or thinks he sees it, on the brink of ruin, you are beseeched most earnestly my dear Colo. Harrison, to exert yourself in endeavoring to rescue your Country by (let me add) sending your ablest and best Men to Congress—these characters must not slumber nor sleep at home in such times of pressing danger—they must not content themselves in the enjoyment of places of honor or profit in their own Country while the common interests of America are mouldering and sinking into irretrievable (if a remedy is not soon applied) ruin in which theirs also must ultimately be involved. If I was to be called upon to draw a picture of the times and of Men, from what I have seen, and heard, and in part know, I should in one word say that idleness, dissipation & extravagance seems to have laid fast hold of most of them.—That speculation—peculation—and an insatiable thirst for riches seems to have got the better of every other consideration and almost of every order of Men.—That party disputes and personal quarrels are the great business of the day whilst the momentous concerns of an empire—a great and accumulated debt—ruined finances—depreciated money—and want of credit (which in their consequences is the want of everything) are but secondary considerations and postponed from day to day—from week to week as if our affairs wear the most promising aspect—after drawing this picture, which from my Soul I believe to be a true one, I need not repeat to you that I am alarmed and wish to see my Countrymen roused.—I have no resentments, nor do I mean to point at any particular characters,—this I can declare upon my honor for I have every attention paid me by Congress that I can possibly expect and have reason to think that I stand well in their estimation, but in the

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present situation of things I cannot help asking—Where is Mason—Wythe—Jefferson—Nicholas—Pendleton—Nelson—and another I could name—and why, if you are sufficiently impressed with your danger do you not (as New Yk. has done in the case of Mr. Jay) send an extra member or two for at least a certain limited time till the great business of the Nation is put upon a more respectable and happy establishmt.—Your Money is now sinking 5 pr. ct. a day in this city; and I shall not be surprized if in the course of a few months a total stop is put to the currency of it.—And yet an Assembly—a concert—a Dinner—or supper (that will cost three or four hundred pounds) will not only take Men off from acting in but even from thinking of this business while a great part of the Officers of ye Army from absolute necessity are quitting the service and ye more virtuous few rather than do this are sinking by sure degrees into beggary and want.—I again repeat to you that this is not an exaggerated acct.; that it is an alarming one I do not deny, and confess to you that I feel more real distress on acct. of the prest. appearances of things than I have done at any one time since the commencement of the dispute—but it is time to bid you once more adieu.—Providence has heretofore taken me up when all other means and hope seemed to be departing from me in this. I will confide.

On the Need of a Stronger Government

To George Mason

MIDDLEBROOK, 27 March, 1779.

Dear Sir: Though it is not in my power to devote much time to a private correspondence owing to the multiplicity

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of public Letters & other business I have to read, write, & transact; yet, I can with great truth assure you that it would afford me very singular pleasure to be favored at all times with your sentiments in a leizure hour upon public matters of general concernment, as well as those which more immediately respect your own State, if proper conveyances would render prudent a free communication. I am particularly desirous of it at this time because I view things very differently, I fear, from what the people in general do, who seem to think the contest is at an end, & to make money, and get places the only things now remaining to do. I have seen without despondency even for a momt.—the hours which America have stiled her gloomy ones, but I have beheld no day since the commencement of hostilities that I have thought her liberties in such eminent danger as at present.

Friends and Foes seem now to combine to pull down the goodly fabric we have hitherto been raising at the expense of so much time, blood, & treasure—& unless the bodies politic will exert themselves to bring things back to first principles—correct abuse—& punish our internal Foes inevitable ruin must follow,—indeed we seem to be verging so fast to destruction that I am filled with sensations to which I have been a stranger till within these three months.

Our Enemy, behold with exultation & joy, how effectually we labor for their benefit; and from being in a state of absolute despair, and on the point of evacuating America, are now on tiptoe—nothing therefore, in my judgement, can save us but a total reformation in our own conduct or some decisive turn to affairs in Europe. The former alas! to our shame be it spoken! is less likely to happen than the latter; as it is more consistent with the views of the speculators—various tribes of money makers & stock jobbers of all denominations to continue the War for their own

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private emolument without considering that their avarice & thirst for gain must plunge every thing, including themselves in one common ruin.

Were I to indulge my present feelings, & give a loose to that freedom of expression which my unreserved friendship for you would prompt me to, I should say a great deal on this subject.

But letters are liable to so many accidents, & the sentiments of men in office sought after by the enemy with so much avidity, & besides, conveying useful knowledge (if they get into their hands) for the superstructure of their plans, is often perverted to the worse [t] of purposes that I shall be somewhat reserved notwithstanding this letter goes by private hand to Mount Vernon.—I cannot refrain lamenting, however, in the most poignant terms, the fatal policy too prevalent in most of the States of employing their ablest men at home in posts of honor or profit, till the great National Interest is fixed upon a solid basis.—To me, it appears no unjust simile to compare the affairs of this great Continent to the mechanism of a clock, each state representing some one or other of the smaller parts of it which they are endeavoring to put in fine order without considering how useless & unavailing their labor is unless the great Wheel, or Spring which is to set the whole in motion is also well attended to—& kept in good order—I allude to no particular state—nor ought I, it may be said to do so upon their representatives; but, as it is a fact too notorious to be concealed that C— is rent by Party—that much business of a trifling nature & personal concernment withdraw their attention from matters of great national moment at this critical period.—When it is also known that idleness & dissipation take place of close attention & application, a man who wishes well to the liberties of his Country and desires to see its rights established

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cannot avoid crying out where are our men of abilities? Why do they not come forth to save their Country? let this voice my dear Sir call upon you—Jefferson & others—do not from a mistaken opinion that we are about to set down under our own vine, & our own fig tree, let our hitherto noble struggle end in ignom'y—believe me when I tell you there is danger of it—I have pretty good reasons for thinking that Administration a little while ago had resolved to give the matter up, and negotiate a peace with us upon almost any terms; but I shall be much mistaken if they do not now from the present state of our currency dissections & other circumstances push matters to the utmost extremity—nothing I am sure will prevent it but the interposition of Spain, & their disappointed hope from Russia.

On the Hard Lot of the Officers

To Brigadier-General Maxwell

HEADQUARTERS, MIDDLEBROOK, 7 May, 1779.

Sir: I have received your two favors of yesterdays date—one of them with infinite concern. There is nothing which has happened in the course of the war that has given me so much pain as the remonstrances you mention from the officers of the first Jersey regiment. I cannot but consider it as a hasty and imprudent step, which on more cool consideration they will themselves condemn. I am very sensible of the inconveniences under which the officers of the Army labor and I hope they do me the justice to believe, that my endeavors to procure them relief are incessant. There is however more difficulty in satisfying their wishes than perhaps they are aware. Our resources have been hitherto very limited; the situation

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of our money is no small embarrassment, for which, though there are remedies, they cannot be the work of the moment;—Government is not insensible of the merits and sacrifices of the officers, nor, I am persuaded unwilling to make a compensation; but it is a truth, of which a little observation must convince us, that it is very much straitened in the means. Great allowances ought to be made on this account for any delay and seeming backwardness which may appear. Some of the states indeed have done as generously as it is at this juncture in their power, and if others have been less expeditious it ought to be ascribed to some peculiar cause, which a little time aided by example will remove. The patience and perseverance of the Army have been under every disadvantage such as to do them the highest honor both at home and abroad; and have inspired me with unlimited confidence in their virtue, which has consoled me amidst every perplexity and reverse of fortune, to which our affairs in a struggle of this nature were necessarily exposed. Now that we have made so great a progress to the attainment of the end we have in view—so that we cannot fail without a most shameful desertion of our own interests, any thing like a change of conduct would imply a very unhappy change of principles and a forgetfulness as well of what we owe to ourselves as to our country. Did I suppose it possible this could be the case even in a single regiment of the Army, I should be mortified and chagrined beyond expression. I should feel it as a wound given to my own honor, which I consider as embarked with that of the Army at large. But this I believe to be impossible. Any corps that was about to set an example of the kind would weigh well the consequences, and no officer of common discernment and sensibility would hazard them. If they should stand alone in it, independent of other consequences, what would be their feelings on re-

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fleeing that they had held themselves out to the world in a point of light inferior to the rest of the Army? or if their example should be followed, and become general, how would they console themselves for having been the foremost in bringing ruin and disgrace upon their country? They would remember that the Army would share a double portion of the general infamy and distress; and that the character of an American officer would become as despicable as it is now glorious.

I confess the appearances in the present instance are disagreeable; but I am convinced they seem to mean more than they really do. The Jersey officers have not been outdone by any others in the qualities either of citizens or soldiers; and I am confident no part of them would seriously intend anything that would be a stain to their former reputation—The Gentlemen cannot be in earnest; they have only *reasoned wrong about the means of obtaining a good end*, and on reconsideration I hope and flatter myself they will renounce what must appear improper. At the opening of a campaign, when under marching orders for an important service,—their own honor, duty to the public and to themselves,—a regard to military propriety, will not suffer them to persist in a measure which would be a violation of them all. It will even wound their delicacy coolly to reflect that they have hazarded a step which has an air of dictating terms to their country,—by taking advantage of the necessity of the moment.

The declaration they have made to the state at so critical a time, that unless they obtain relief in the short period of three days, they must be considered out of the service, has very much this aspect; and the seeming relaxation of continuing till the state can have a *reasonable* time to provide other officers will be thought only a superficial veil.

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I am now to request that you will convey my sentiments to the Gentlemen concerned and endeavor to make them sensible that they are in an error. The service for which the regiment was intended will not admit of delay; it must at all events march on Monday morning, in the first place to this camp, and further directions will be given when it arrives. I am sure I shall not be mistaken in expecting a prompt and chearful obedience.

On the Charges of General Lee

To Joseph Reed

WEST POINT, 29 July, 1779.

Dear Sir: I have a pleasure in acknowledging the receipt of your obliging favor of the 15th inst., and in finding by it, that the author of the *Queries*, "*Political and Military*," has had no great cause to exult in the favorable reception of them by the public. Without a clue, I should have been at no loss to trace the malevolent writer; but I have seen a history of the transaction, and felt a pleasure mingled with pain at the narration. To stand well in the estimation of one's country is a happiness, that no rational creature can be insensible of. To be pursued, first under the mask of friendship, and, when disguise would suit no longer, as an open calumniator, with gross misrepresentation and *self-known* falsehoods, carries an alloy, which no temper can bear with perfect composure.

The motives, which actuate this gentleman, are better understood by himself than me. If he can produce a single instance, in which I have mentioned his name, after his tryal commenced, where it was in my power to avoid it, and, when it was not, where I have done it with

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the smallest degree of acrimony or disrespect, I will consent that the world shall view my character in as disreputable a light, as he wishes to place it. What cause, then, there is for such a profusion of venom, as he is emitting upon all occasions, unless by an act of public duty, in bringing him to trial at his own solicitation, I have disappointed him and raised his ire; or, conceiving that, in proportion as he can darken the shades of my character, he illuminates his own;—whether these, I say, or motives yet more dark and hidden, govern him, I shall not undertake to decide; nor have I time to inquire into them at present.

If I had ever assumed the character of a military genius and the officer of experience; if, under these false colors, I had solicited the command I was honored with; or if, after my appointment, I had presumptuously driven on, under the sole guidance of my own judgment and self-will, and misfortunes, the result of obstinacy and misconduct, not of necessity, had followed, I should have thought myself a proper object for the lash, not only of his, but of the pen of every writer, and a fit subject for public resentment. But when it is well known that the command was in a manner forced upon me, that I accepted it with the utmost diffidence, from a consciousness that it required greater abilities and more experience than I possessed, to conduct a great military machine, embarrassed as I knew ours must be by a variety of complex circumstances, and as it were but little better than a mere chaos; and when nothing more was promised on my part, than has been most inviolably performed; it is rather grating to pass over in silence charges, which may impress the uninformed, tho others know, that these charges have neither reason nor truth to support them, and that a simple narrative of facts would defeat all his assertions, notwithstanding they are

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made with an effrontery, which few men do, and, for the honor of human nature, none ought to possess.

If this gentleman is envious of my station, and conceives I stand in his way to preferment, I can assure him, in most solemn terms, that the first wish of my soul is to return to that peaceful retirement, and domestick ease and happiness, from whence I came. To this end all my labors have been directed, and for this purpose have I been more than four years a perfect slave, endeavoring, under as many embarrassing circumstances as ever fell to one man's lot to encounter, and as pure motives as ever man was influenced by, to promote the cause and service I had embarked in.

On His Table

To Dr. John Cochran, Surgeon-General

WEST-POINT, 16 August, 1779.

Dr. Doctr.: I have asked Mrs. Cochran & Mrs. Livingston to dine with me to-morrow; but I am not in honor bound to apprise them of their fare? As I hate deception, even where the imagination only is concerned; I will. It is needless to premise, that my table is large enough to hold the ladies. Of this they had ocular proof yesterday. To say how it is usually covered, is rather more essential; and this shall be the purport of my Letter.

Since our arrival at this happy spot, we have had a ham, (sometimes a shoulder) of Bacon, to grace the head of the Table; a piece of roast Beef adorns the foot; and a dish of beans, or greens, (almost imperceptible,) decorates the center. When the cook has a mind to cut a figure, (which I presume will be the case to-morrow,) we have two Beef-steak pyes, or dishes of crabs, in addition, one

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on each side the center dish, dividing the space & reducing the distance between dish & dish to about 6 feet, which without them would be near 12 feet apart. Of late he has had the surprising sagacity to discover, that apples will make pyes; and its a question, if, in the violence of his efforts, we do not get one of apples, instead of having both of Beef-steaks. If the ladies can put up with such entertainment, and will submit to partake it on plates once Tin but now Iron—(not become so b— the labor of scouring), I shall be happy to see them; an am dear Doctor, yours, &c.

On the Injustice of Tender Laws

To Lund Washington

WEST POINT, 17 August, 1779.

I have since considered this matter in every point of view my judgment enables me to place it, and am resolved to receive no more old debts (such I mean as were contracted and ought to have been paid before the war) at the present nominal value of the money, unless compelled to it, or it is the practice of others to do it. Neither justice, reason, nor policy requires it. The law undoubtedly was well designed. It was intended to stamp a value, and give a free circulation to, the paper bills of credit; but it never was nor could have been intended to make a man take a shilling or sixpence in the pound for a just debt, wch. he is well able to pay, and thereby involve'g himself in ruin. I am as willing now, as I ever was, to take paper money for *every* kind of debt, and at its present depreciated value for those debts, which have been contracted since the money became so; but I will not in future receive the

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nominal sum for such old debts as come under the above description, except as before excepted.

The fear of injuring, by any example of mine, the credit of our paper currency, if I attempted to discriminate between the real and nominal value of Paper money, has already sunk me a large Sum, if the bonds before mentd. are paid off; the advantage taken in doing which no man of honor or common honesty can reconcile to his own feelings and conscience; not as it respects me, do I mean, but transactions of this kind generally. The thing which induces me to mention the matter to you at present is, the circumstance you have related respecting the wages of Roberts, which you say, (according to his demands,) will amount to upwards of £2000, and comes to as much for the Service of a *Common* miller for one year only, as I shall get for 600 acres of land sold Mercer in the best of times and in the most valuable part of Virginia, that ought to have been pd. for before the money began to depreciate; nay, years before the war. This is such a manifest abuse of reason and justice that no arguments can reconcile it to common sense or common honesty. Instead of appealing to me, who have not the means of informatn., or knowledge of common usage and practice in matters of this kind in the State, or the Laws that govern there, I wish you would consult men of honor, honesty, and firm attachment to the cause, and govern yourself by their advice, or by yr. conduct. If it be customary with others to receive money in this way, that is, 6d or 1/ in the pound of old debts; if it is thought to be advancive of the great cause we are embarked in for individuals to do so, thereby ruining themselves while others are reaping the benefit of such distress; if the Law imposes this, and it is thought right to submit, I will not say aught against or oppose another word to it. No man has, nor no man will go, further to

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serve the Public than myself. If sacrificing my whole Estate would effect any valuable purpose, I would not hesitate one moment in doing it. But my submitting to matters of this kind, unless it is done so by others, is no more than a drop in the bucket. In fact, it is not serving the public, but enriching individuals, and countenancing dishonesty; for sure I am, that no honest man would attempt to pay 20/ with one, or perhaps half of one. In a word, I had rather make a present of the Bonds, than receive payment of them in so shameful a way.

A Letter of Friendship

To the Marquis de Lafayette, Paris

WEST-POINT, 30 September, 1779.

My Dear Marquis: It gave me infinite pleasure to hear, from yourself of the favorable reception you met with from your sovereign, and of the joy, which your safe arrival in France had diffused among your friends. I had no doubt, but that this wou'd be the case. To hear it from yourself adds pleasure to the acct.; and here, my dear friend let me congratulate you on your new, honorable, and pleasing appointment in the army commanded by the Count de Vaux, which I shall accom'y with an assurance, that none can do it with more warmth of affection, or sincere joy, than myself. Your forward zeal in the cause of liberty; Your singular attachment to this infant world; your ardent and persevering efforts, not only in America, but since your return to France, to serve the United States; your polite attention to Americans, and your strict and uniform friendship for *me*, has ripened the first impressions of esteem and attachment, which I imbibed for you,

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into such perfect love and gratitude, that neither time nor absence can impair. Which will warrant my assuring you, that, whether in the character of an officer at the head of a corps of gallant French, (if circumstances should require this,) whether as a major-genl. commanding a division of the American army, or whether, after our Swords and spears have given place to the plough-share and pruning-Hook, I see you as a private gentleman, a friend and companion, I shall welcome you in all the warmth of friendship to Columbia's shores; and, in the latter case, to my rural cottage, where homely fare and a cordial reception shall be substituted for delicacies and costly living. This, from past experience, I know *you* can submit to; and if the lovely partner of your happiness will consent to participate with *us* in such rural entertainment and amusem'ts, I can undertake, in behalf of Mrs. Washington, that she will do every thing in her power to make Virginia agreeable to the Marchioness. My inclination and endeavors to do this cannot be doubted, when I assure you, that I love every body that is dear to you, consequently participate in the pleasure you feel in ye prospt. of again becoming a parent, and do most sincerely congratulate you and your Lady on this fresh pledge she is about to give you of her love.

You are pleased, my dear Marquis, to express an earnest desire of seeing me in France, (after the establishment of our independency), and do me the honor to add, that you are not singular in your request. Let me entreat you to be persuaded, that to meet you any where, after the final accomplishment of so glorious an event, would contribute to my happiness; and that to visit a county, to whose generous aid we stand so much indebted, would be an additional pleasure; but remember, my good friend, that I am unacquainted with your language, that I am too far ad-

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vanced in years to acquire a knowledge of it, and that, to converse through the medium of an interpreter upon common occasions, especially with the Ladies, must appear so extremely awkward, insipid, and uncouth, that I can scarce bear it in idea. I will, therefore, hold myself disengaged for the present; but when I see you in Virginia, we will talk of this matter and fix our plans.

But to conclude you requested from me a long letter—I have given you one—but methinks my dear Marquis I hear you say there is a reason in all things—that this is too long—I am clearly in sentiment with you and will have mercy on you in my next—But at present must pray your patience a while longer, till I can make a tender of my most respectful compliments to the Marchioness—Tell her, (if you have not made a mistake and offered your own love instead of *hers*, to me) that I have a heart susceptible of the tenderest passion, and that it is already so strongly impressed with the most favorable ideas of her, that she must be cautious of putting loves torch to it, as you must be in fanning the flame.—But here again methinks I hear you say, I am not apprehensive of danger—My wife is young—you are growing old and the Atlantic is between you—All this is true, but know my good friend that no distance can keep *anxious* lovers long asunder, and that the wonders of former ages may be revived in this—But alas! will you not remark that amidst all the wonders recorded in holy writ no instance can be produced where a young Woman from *real inclination* has preferred an old man—This is so much against me that I shall not be able *I fear* to contest the prize with you—yet, under the encouragement you have given me I shall enter the list for so inestimable a jewel.

I will now reverse the scene and inform you that Mrs. Washington, (who set out for Virginia when we took the

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field in June,) often has in her letter to me inquired if I had heard from you, and will be much pleased at hearing that you are well and happy. In her name, (as she is not here,) I thank you for your polite attention to her, and shall speak her sense of the honor conferred on her by the Marchioness. When I look back to the length of this letter, I am so much astonished and frightened at it myself that, I have not the courage to give it a careful reading for the purpose of correction. You must, therefore, receive it with all its imperfections, accompanied with this assurance, that, though there may be inaccuracies in the letter, there is not a single defect in the friendship of, my dear Marquis, your, &c.

The Situation Serious

To Governor Trumbull

HEAD QUARTERS, MORRIS-TOWN,
8 January, 1780.

Dear Sir: I have the honor to enclose your Excellency the copy of a letter I have just received from the late Commissary General by which you will see upon how ill a footing our future prospects of supplies are, particularly with respect to meat. This corresponds with representations from every quarter and with what we actually feel. The army has been near three months on a short allowance of bread; within a fortnight past almost perishing. They have been sometimes without bread, sometimes without meat; at no time with much of either, and often without both. They have borne their distress, (in which the officers have shared a common lot with the men,) with as much fortitude as human nature is capable of; but they

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have been at last brought to such a dreadful extremity that no authority or influence of the officers—no virtue or patience in the men themselves, could any longer restrain them from obeying the dictates of their sufferings. The soldiery have in several instances plundered the neighboring inhabitants even of their necessary subsistence. Without an immediate remedy this evil would soon become intolerable, and unhappily for us, we have no prospect of relief through the ordinary channels. We are reduced to this alternative, either to let the army disband or to call upon the several counties of this State to furnish a proportion of cattle and grain for the immediate supply of our wants. If the magistrates refuse their aid, we shall be obliged to have recourse to a military impress. But this, Sir, is an expedient as temporary in its relief as it is disagreeable in its execution and injurious in its tendency. An Army is not to be supported by measures of this kind. Something of a more permanent and effectual nature must be done. The legislative authority of the respective States must interpose its aid. The public treasury is exhausted; we have no magazines anywhere that I know of; the public officers have neither money nor credit to procure supplies. I assure your Excellency, as far as my knowledge extends, this is a faithful representation of our affairs. Our situation is more than serious, it is alarming. I doubt not your Excellency will view it in the same light, and that the Legislature of the State of Connecticut will give a fresh proof of their wisdom and zeal for the common cause by their exertions upon the present occasion; and I hope I shall be thought to be justified by circumstances when I add, that unless each State enters into the business of supplying the army, as a matter seriously interesting to our political salvation, we may shortly be plunged into misfortunes from which it may be impossible to recover.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On the Lack of a Kitchen

To Major-General Greene

MORRIS-TOWN, 22 January, 1780.

Dear Sir: Appear's, and facts must speak for themselves. To these I appeal. I have been at my prest. quarters since the 1st day of Decr., and have not a Kitchen to cook a Dinner in, altho' the Logs have been put together some considerable time by my own Guard. Nor is there a place at this moment in which a servant can lodge, with the smallest degree of comfort. Eighteen belonging to my family, and all Mrs. Ford's, are crowded together in her Kitchen, and scarce one of them able to speak for the colds they have caught.

I have repeatedly taken notice of this inconveniency to Majr. Gibbs, and have as often been told, that boards were not to be had. I acquiesced, and believe you will do me the justice to acknowledge, yt. it never has been my practice to involve the public in any expense I could possibly avoid, or derive benefits which would be inconvenient or prejudicial to others. To share a common lot, and participate the inconveniences, wch. the army, from the peculiarity of our circumstances, are oblig'd to undergo, has with me been a fundamental principle; and, while I conceived this to be the case universally, I was perfectly content. That it is not so, I app'l to your own observation; though I never intended to make the remark nor should I have done it, but for the question wh. involuntarily drew from me the answer, wch. has become the subject of your Letter.

Equally opposed is it to my wishes and expectation, that you should be troubled in matters respecting my accommodation, further than to give the necessary orders, and fur-

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nish materials, without which orders are nugatory. From what you have said, I am fully satisfied that the persons to whom you entrusted the execution of the business are alone to blame; for certain I am, they might by attention have obtained, (equally with others,) as many boards as would have answered my purposes long ere this. Far, very far is it from me, to censure any measure you have adopted for your own accommodation, or for the more immediate convenience of Mrs. Greene. At all times I think you are entitled to as good as circumstances will afford, and, in the present condition of your Lady, conceive that no delay could be admitted. I shd. therefore with great willingness have made my conveniences yield to hers, if the point had lain there, being very sincerely, your obedient and affectionate servant, &c.

On the Duty of Officers

To Lord Stirling

[Private]

MORRIS-TOWN, 5 March, 1780.

My Lord: I have read the orders, wch. you had framed for your division. They are certainly good; but in substance, except in a very few instances are very explicitly enjoined by the regulations, and have been reiterated at different periods in the general orders, antecedent to the promulgation of the established "regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops," and since in many particular ones by a reference to them; as your Lordship may perceive by recurring to the Orderly Book. At our last interview I slightly touched on this subject; but I shall embrace the present occasion to repeat more fully, that

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orders unless they are followed by close attention to the performance of them, are of little avail. They are read by some, only heard of by others, and inaccurately attended to by all, whilst by a few they are totally disregarded; and this will for ever be the case, till the principal officers of the army begin the work of reformation by a close inspection into the police, the conduct of the officers, and men under their respective commands, and will endeavor to restore public œconomy and saving, than wch. nothing can better suit our present circumstances.

Example, whether it be good or bad, has a powerful influence, and the higher in Rank the officer is, who sets it, the more striking it is. Hence, and from all military experience, it has been found necessary for officers of every denomination to inspect narrowly the conduct of such parts of the army and corps, as are committed to their care. Without this, the regulations "for the Order and Discipline of the Troops," established by the highest authority, and wch. are short, simple, and easy in the perform'e, and the General orders, will be little attended to; of course neglect of discipline, want of order, irregularity, waste, abuse, and embezzlement of public property, insensibly creep in. It is idle to suppose, under a descripn. like this, ye ground for which none I believe will deny, that a division, Brigade, or Regimental order, will have greater weight than those of Congress, or yr. Xc.; but, if the Persons issuing them would devote, as duty indispensably requires, a reasonable portion of their time to a personal and close inspection into the affairs of their respective commands; would frequently parade their Regiments, and compare the actual strength of them, their arms, accoutrements, and cloathes, with the returns, and have the deficiencies, (if any there be,) satisfactorily accounted for and provided, agreeably to the establishment of the army;

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would see that the regulations, the general orders, and their own, were carried into execution, where practicable, or report the causes of the failure when they cannot; that all returns are made in due form, in proper time, and correctly, comparing one return with another, in order to prevent mistakes, correct abuses, and do justice to the public; and that, in visiting such parts of the line, and such particular corps, as are entrusted to their care, praise is bestowed on the deserving, reprehension, and, (where necessary,) punishment on the negligent; the good effect would be almost instantaneously felt. Frequent visits and inspection into matters of this kind would produce more real good in one month, than volumes of the best digested orders, that the wit of man can devise, wd. accomplish in seven years.

Were it not for the infinity of perplexing business, that is referred to and comes before me from every quarter; the multiplicity of Letters and papers I have to read and consider, many of which originate in the want of application and due attention being given by the Genl. officers to their respective commands, which brings a variety of applications to head-Qrs., that ought to be settled in the respective lines, I shd. devote much more of my time to the military parts of my duty. Unhappily, while necessity with-holds me from these attentions, a want of being sufficiently impressed with its importance, or some other cause, operates with equal force on others; and the few rides I am able to make to the Camp, and the hours wch. I can devote to the business of the line, never fail producing mortifying proofs of inattention and relaxation of discipline. The country, in all my excursions, I find spread over with soldiers, notwithstanding the pointed orders which have been issued to restrain them, and to discountenance a practice, wch. has been found pregnant of de-

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sertion, robbery, and even murders, and totally repugnant to every principle of discipline and the Rules laid down for our government.

This, my Lord, is a free and friendly representn. of facts. Your letter drew it from *me* to *you* at this time; but I shall take occasion, so soon as the Genl. officers assemble, to require in explicit terms from them a conduct conformable to these sentimts. in future; for without it there is no possibility in the present perplexity of affairs, and the divided attention I am obliged to give to the numberless objects, wch. press upon me, to move the military machine with any degree of propriety without their assistance.

On the Use of Dictatorial Powers

To President Reed

HEAD-QUARTERS, BERGEN COUNTY,
4 July, 1780.

My dear Sir: The Legislature of Pennsylvania has vested you, in case of necessity, with a power of declaring Martial Law throughout the State, to enable you to take such measures as the exigency may demand. So far the Legislature has done its part. Europe, America, the State itself, will look to you for the rest. The power vested in you will admit of all the latitude, that could be desired, and may be made to mean anything, the public safety may require. If it is not exerted proportionably, you will be responsible for the consequences. Nothing, my dear Sir, can be more delicate and critical than your situation; a full discretionary power lodged in your hands in conjunction with the Council; great expectations in our allies and in the People of this country; ample means in the

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State for great exertions of every kind; a powerful party on one hand to take advantage of every opening to prejudice you, on the other popular indolence and avarice, averse to every measure inconsistent with present ease and present interest. In this dilemma, there is a seeming danger whatever side you take; it remains to choose that, which has least real danger and will best promote the public weal. This in my opinion clearly is to exert the powers entrusted to you with a boldness and vigor suited to the emergency.

In general I esteem it a good maxim, that the best way to preserve the confidence of the people durably is to promote their true interest. There are particular exigencies when this maxim has peculiar force. When any great object is in view, the popular mind is roused into expectation, and prepared to make sacrifices both of ease and property. If those, to whom they confide the management of their affairs, do not call them to make these sacrifices, and the object is not attained, or they are involved in the reproach of not having contributed as much as they ought to have done towards it, they will be mortified at the disappointment, they will feel the censure, and their resentment will rise against those, who, with sufficient authority, have omitted to do what their interest and their honor required. Extensive powers not exercised as far as was necessary have, I believe, scarcely ever failed to ruin the possessor. The Legislature and the People in your case, would be very glad to excuse themselves by condemning you. You would be assailed with blame from every quarter, and your enemies would triumph.

The party opposed to you in the Government are making great efforts. I am told the bank, established for supplying the army, is principally under the auspices of that party. It will undoubtedly give them great credit with the People, and you have no effectual way to counterbalance

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this, but by employing all your influence and authority to render services proportioned to your station. Hitherto I confess to you frankly, my dear Sir, I do not think your affairs are in the train which might be wished; and if Pennsylvania does not do its part fully, it is of so much importance in the general scale, that we must fail of success, or limit our views to mere defence. I have conversed with some gentlemen on the measure of filling your battalions. They seemed to think you could not exceed what the Legislature had done for this purpose. I am of very different sentiment. The establishment of Martial Law implies, in my judgment, the right of calling any part of your citizens into military service, and in any manner which may be found expedient; and I have no doubt the draft may be executed.

I write to you with the freedom of friendship, and I hope you will esteem it the truest mark I could give you of it. In this view, whether you think my observations well founded or not, the motive will, I am persuaded, render them agreeable. In offering my respects to Mrs. Reed I must be permitted to accompany them with a tender of my very warm acknowledgments to her and you for the civilities and attention both of you have been pleased to show Mrs. Washington,—and for the honor you have done me in calling the young Christian by my name.

On the Growth of State Jealousy

To Fielding Lewis

BERGEN COUNTY, JERSEY, 6 July, 1780.

The Gazettes will have given you an account of the enemy's movements on the 7th and 23d of last month

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from Elizabethtown-point, and of their having taken post there from the one date to the other; there can be no occasion therefore to detail the account in this place; but I may lament in the bitterness of my soul, that the fatal policy which has pervaded all our measures from the beginning of the war, and which no experience however dear bought can change, should have reduced our army to so low an ebb, as not to have given a more effectual opposition to those movements than we did; or that we should be obliged to be removing our stores from place to place to keep them out of the way of the enemy instead of driving that enemy from our country—but our weakness invited these insults, and why they did not *attempt at least* to do more than they did, I cannot conceive. Nor will it be easy to make any one at the distance of 400 miles believe that our army, weakened as it is by the expiration of men's enlistments, should at times be five or six days together without meat—then as many without bread—and once or twice, two or three days together without either—and that, in the same army, there should be numbers of men with scarcely as much cloathing as would cover their nakedness, and at least a fourth of the whole with not even the shadow of a blanket, severe as the winter has been. Under these circumstances it is not difficult matter to conceive what a time I must have had to keep up appearances and prevent the most disastrous consequences.

It may be asked how these things have come to pass? the answer is plain—and may be ascribed to the want of system, not to say foresight—originally (if it is not still the case with some) to a fatal jealousy (under our circumstances) of a standing army—by which means we neglected to obtain soldiers for the war when zeal and patriotism run high, and men were eager to engage for a trifle or for nothing; the consequence of which has been

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that we have protracted the war—expended millions and tens of millions of pounds which might have been saved, and have a new army to raise and discipline once or twice a year, and with which we can undertake nothing because we have nothing to build upon, as the men are slipping from us every day by means of their expiring enlistments. To these fundamental errors, may be added another which I expect will prove our ruin, and that is the relinquishment of Congressional powers to the States individually—all the business is now *attempted*, for it is not done, by a timid kind of recommendation from Congress to the States; the consequence of which is, that instead of pursuing one uniform system, which in execution shall correspond in time and manner, each State undertakes to determine—

1st. Whether they will comply or not.

2nd. In what manner they will do it, and

3d. In what time—by which means scarcely any one measure is, or can be executed, while great expences are incurred and the willing and zealous States ruined. In a word our measures are not under the influence and direction of one council, but thirteen, each of which is actuated by local views and politics, without considering the fatal consequences of not complying with plans which the united wisdom of America in its representative capacity have digested, or the unhappy tendency of delay, mutilation or alteration. I do not scruple to add, and I give it decisively as my opinion—that unless the States will content themselves with a full and well-chosen representation in Congress and vest that body with absolute powers in all matters relative to the great purposes of war, and of general concern (by which the States unitedly are affected, reserving to themselves all matters of local and internal polity for the regulation of order and good government) we are attempting an impossibility, and very soon

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shall become (if it is not already the case) a many-headed monster—a heterogenous mass—that never will or can steer to the same point. The contest among the different States *now* is not which shall do most for the common cause—but which shall do least, hence arise disappointments and delay, one State waiting to see what another will or will not do, through fear of doing too much, and by their deliberations, alterations, and sometimes refusals to comply with the requisitions of Congress, after that Congress spent months in reconciling (as far as it is possible) jarring interests, in order to frame their resolutions, as far as the nature of the case will admit, upon principles of equality.

There is another source from whence much of our present distress, and past difficulties have flowed, and that is the hope and expectation which seizes the States, and Congress toward the close of every year, that Peace must take place in the Winter—This never fails to produce an apathy which lulls them into ease and security, and involves the most distressing consequences at the opening of every campaign. We may rely upon it that we shall never have Peace till the enemy are convinced that we are in a condition to carry on the war. It is no new maxim in politics that for a nation to obtain Peace, or insure it, it must be prepared for war.

But it is time for me to recollect myself and quit a subject which would require a folio volume to illucidate, and expose the folly of our measures. To rectify past blunders is impossible, but we might profit by the experience of them, tho' even here I doubt, as I am furnished with many instances to the contrary.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

Supplies and Men Inadequate

To the President of Congress

ORANGETOWN, 20 August, 1780.

Sir: While we are meditating offensive operations, which may either not be undertaken at all, or being undertaken may fail, I am persuaded Congress are not inattentive to the present state of the army, and will view in the same light with me the necessity of providing in time against a period—the 1st of January—when one half of our present force will dissolve. The shadow of an army, that will remain, will have every motive, except mere patriotism, to abandon the service, without the hope, which has hitherto supported them, of a change for the better. This is almost extinguished now, and certainly will not outlive the campaign, unless it finds something more substantial to rest upon. This is a truth, of which every spectator of the distresses of the army cannot help being convinced; those at a distance may speculate differently, but on the spot an opinion to the contrary, judging human nature on the usual scale, would be chimerical. The honorable the Committee, who have seen and heard for themselves, will add their testimony to mine, and the wisdom and justice of Congress cannot fail to give it the most serious attention. To me it will appear miraculous, if our affairs can maintain themselves much longer in their present train. If either the temper or the resources of the country will not admit of an alteration, we may expect soon to be reduced to the humiliating condition of seeing the cause of America, in America, upheld by foreign arms. The generosity of our allies has a claim to all our confidence and our gratitude, but it is neither for the honor of America,

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nor for the interest of the common cause, to leave the work entirely to them.

Had we formed a permanent army in the beginning, which, by the continuance of the same men in service, had been capable of discipline, we never should have had to retreat with a handful of men across the Delaware in '76, trembling for the fate of America, which nothing but the infatuation of the enemy could have saved; we should not have remained all the succeeding winter at their mercy, with sometimes scarcely a sufficient body of men to mount the ordinary guards, liable at every moment to be dissipated, if they had only thought proper to march against us: we should not have been under the necessity of fighting at Brandywine, with an unequal number of raw troops, and afterwards of seeing Philadelphia fall a prey to a victorious army; we should not have been at Valley Forge with less than half the force of the enemy, destitute of every thing, in a situation neither to resist nor to retire; we should not have seen New York left with a handful of men, yet an overmatch for the main army of these States, while the principal part of their force was detached for the reduction of two of them; we should not have found ourselves this spring so weak, as to be insulted by five thousand men, unable to protect our baggage and Magazines, their security depending on a good countenance, and a want of enterprise in the enemy; we should not have been the greatest part of the war inferior to the enemy, indebted for our safety to their inactivity, enduring frequently the mortification of seeing inviting opportunities to ruin them pass unimproved for want of a force, which the country was completely able to afford; to see the Country ravaged, our towns burnt, the inhabitants plundered, abused, murdered with impunity from the same cause.

There is every reason to believe, the War has been pro-

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tracted on this account. Our opposition being less, made the successes of the enemy greater. The fluctuation of the army kept alive their hopes, and at every period of the dissolution of a considerable part of it, they have flattered themselves with some decisive advantages. Had we kept a permanent army on foot, the enemy could have had nothing to hope for, and would in all probability have listened to terms long since.

If the army is left in its present situation, it must continue an encouragement to the efforts of the enemy; if it is put upon a respectable one, it must have a contrary effect, and nothing, I believe, will tend more to give us peace the ensuing winter. It will be an interesting winter. Many circumstances will contribute to a negotiation. An army on foot not only for another campaign, but for several campaigns, would determine the enemy for pacific measures, and enable us to insist upon favorable terms in forcible language; an army insignificant in numbers, dissatisfied, crumbling into pieces, would be the strongest temptation they could have to try the experiment a little longer. It is an old maxim, that the surest way to make a good peace is to be well prepared for war.

Congress must be made more Efficient

To James Duane, in Congress

HD.-QRS., TAPPAN, 4 October, 1780.

I share with you the pleasure you feel from the measures taking to strengthen the hands of Congress. I am convinced it is essential to our safety, that Congress should have an *efficient* power. The want of it must ruin us. That satisfaction I have in any successes that attend

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us, even in the alleviation of misfortunes, is always al—
laid by a fear that it will lull us into security. Supine—
ness and a disposition to flatter ourselves seem to make
parts of our national character. When we receive a check,
and are not quite undone, we are apt to fancy we have
gained a victory; and, when we do gain any little ad—
vantage, we imagine it decisive and expect the war is imme—
diately to end. The history of the war is a history of
false hopes and temporary expedients. Would to God
they were to end here! This winter, if I am not mistaken,
will open a still more embarrassing scene, than we have yet
experienced, to the southward. I have little doubt, should
we not gain a naval superiority, that Sir Henry Clinton
will detach to the southward to extend his conquests. I am
far from being satisfied that we shall be prepared to repel
his attempts.

A Letter of Courtesy

*To Benjamin Franklin, Minister Plenipotentiary at the
Court of France*

BERGEN COUNTY, NEW JERSEY,

11 October, 1780.

Dear Sir: I was very much obliged by the letter, which
you did me the honor to write me by our amiable young
friend, the Marquis de Lafayette, whose exertions to serve
this country in his own are additional proofs of his zealous
attachment to our cause, and have endeared him to us still
more. He came out flushed with expectations of a decisive
campaign, and fired with hopes of acquiring fresh laurels;
but in both he has been disappointed; for we have been
condemned to an inactivity as inconsistent with the situa—
tion of our affairs, as with the ardor of his temper.

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I am sensible of all I owe you, my dear Sir, for your sentiments of me; and while I am happy in your esteem, I cannot but wish for occasions of giving you marks of mine. The idea of making a tour together, which you suggest, after the war, would be one of the strongest motives I could have to postpone my plan of retirement, and make a visit to Europe, if my domestic habits, which seem to acquire strength from restraint, did not tell me I shall find it impossible to resist them longer than my duty to the public calls for the sacrifice of my inclinations.

On the Treason of Arnold

To Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens

HD.-QRS., PASSAIC FALLS,
13 October, 1780.

My dear Laurens: In no instance since the commencement of the war, has the interposition of Providence appeared more remarkably conspicuous than in the rescue of the post and garrison of West point from Arnold's villanous perfidy. How far he meant to involve me in the catastrophe of this place, does not appear by any indubitable evidence; and I am rather inclined to think he did not wish to hazard the more important object of his treachery, by attempting to combine two events, the lesser of which might have marr'd the greater. A combination of extraordinary circumstances, and unaccountable deprivation of presence of mind in a man of the first abilities, and the virtue of three militia men, threw the adjutant-general of the British forces, (with full proofs of Arnold's treachery,) into our hands. But for the egregious folly, or the bewildered conception, of Lieut.-Colonel Jameson,

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who seemed lost in astonishment, and not to have known what he was doing, I should undoubtedly have got Arnold. André has met his fate, and with that fortitude, which was to be expected from an accomplished man and gallant officer; but I am mistaken if, at *this* time, "Arnold is undergoing the torment of a mental Hell." He wants feeling. From some traits of his character, which have lately come to my knowledge, he seems to have been so hackneyed in villany, and so lost to all sense of honor and shame, that while his faculties will enable him to continue his sordid pursuits, there will be no time for remorse.

Affairs at a Crisis

To George Mason

HEAD-QUARTERS, PASSAIC FALLS,
22 October, 1780.

Dear Sir: In consequence of a resolve of Congress directing an enquiry into the conduct of General Gates, and authorizing me to appoint some other officer in his place during the enquiry, I have made choice of Major-General Greene who will, I expect, have the honor of presenting you with this letter.

As General Greene can give you the most perfect information in detail of our present distresses, and future prospects, I shall content myself with giving the aggregate account of them. And with respect to the first, they are so great and complicated, that it is scarcely within the powers of description to give an adequate idea of them—with regard to the second, unless there is a material change both in our military and civil policy, it will be in vain to contend much longer.

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We are without money, and have been so for a great length of time; without provisions and forage, except what is taken by impress; without cloathing, and shortly shall be (in a manner) without men. In a word we have lived upon expedients till we can live no longer, and it may truly be said that the history of this war, is a history of false hopes and temporary devices, instead of system, and œconomy which results from it.

If we mean to continue our struggles, (and it is to be hoped we shall not relinquish our claims) we must do it upon an entire new plan. We must have a permanent force, not a force that is constantly fluctuating and sliding from under us as a pedestal of ice would do from a statue in a summer's day, involving us in expence that baffles all calculation—an expence which no funds are equal to.—We must at the same time contrive ways and means to aid our Taxes by Loans, and put our finances upon a more certain and stable footing than they are at present. Our civil government must likewise undergo a reform—ample powers must be lodged in Congress as the head of the Federal union, adequate to all the purposes of war. Unless these things are done, our efforts will be in vain, and only serve to accumulate expence, add to our perplexities, and dissatisfy the people without a prospect of obtaining the prize in view. But these sentiments do not appear well in a hasty letter, without digestion or order. I have not time to give them otherwise,—and shall only assure you that they are well meant, however crude they may appear.

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On the State of American Affairs

To Lieutenant-Colonel John Laurens

NEW WINDSOR, 15 January, 1781.

Dear Sir: In compliance with your request I shall commit to writing the result of our conferences on the present state of American affairs, in which I have given you my ideas with that freedom and explicitness, which the objects of your commission, my entire confidence in you, and the exigency demand. To me it appears evident:

1st. That, considering the diffused population of those States, the consequent difficulty of drawing together its resources, the composition and temper of a *part* of the inhabitants, the want of a sufficient stock of national wealth as a foundation for revenue, and the almost total extinction of commerce, the efforts we have been compelled to make for carrying on the war have exceeded the natural abilities of this country, and by degrees brought it to a crisis, which renders immediate and efficacious succors from abroad indispensable to its safety.

2dly. That, notwithstanding, from the confusion always attendant on a revolution, from our having had governments to frame and every species of civil and military institutions to create, from that inexperience in affairs necessarily incident to a nation in its commencement, some error may have been committed in the administration of our finances, to which a part of our embarrassments are to be attributed; yet they are principally to be ascribed to an essential defect of means, to the want of a sufficient stock of wealth, as mentioned in the first article, which, continuing to operate, will make it impossible by any merely interior exertions to extricate ourselves from those embarrass-

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ments, restore public credit, and furnish the funds requisite for the support of the war.

3dly. That experience has demonstrated the impracticability long to maintain a paper credit without funds for its redemption. The depreciation of our currency was in the main a necessary effect of the want of those funds; and its restoration is impossible for the same reason, to which the general diffidence that has taken place among the people is an additional and, in the present state of things, an insuperable obstacle.

4thly. That the mode, which for want of money has been substituted for supplying the army, by assessing a proportion of the productions of the earth, has hitherto been found ineffectual, has frequently exposed the army to the most calamitous distress, and from its novelty and incompatibility with ancient habits, is regarded by the people as burthensome and oppressive, has excited serious discontents, and in some places alarming symptoms of opposition. This mode has, besides, many particular inconveniences, which contribute to make it inadequate to our wants, and ineligible but as an auxiliary.

5thly. That, from the best estimates of the annual expense of the war and the annual revenues which these States are capable of affording, there is a large balance to be supplied by public credit. The resource of domestic loans is inconsiderable, because there are properly speaking few moneyed men, and the few there are can employ their money more profitably otherwise; added to which, the instability of the currency and the deficiency of funds have impaired the public credit.

6thly. That the patience of the army, from an almost uninterrupted series of complicated distress, is now nearly exhausted, and their discontents matured to an extremity, which has recently had very disagreeable consequences,

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and which demonstrates the absolute necessity of speedy relief, a relief not within the compass of our means. You are too well acquainted with all their sufferings for want of clothing, for want of provisions, for want of pay.

7thly. That, the people being dissatisfied with the mode of supporting the war, there is cause to apprehend, that evils actually felt in the prosecution may weaken those sentiments which began it, founded, not on immediate sufferings, but on a speculative apprehension of future sufferings from the loss of their liberties. There is danger, that a commercial and free people, little accustomed to heavy burthens, pressed by impositions of a new and odious kind, may not make a proper allowance for the necessity of the conjuncture, and may imagine they have only exchanged one tyranny for another.

8thly. That, from all the foregoing considerations result, 1st, absolute necessity of an immediate, ample, and efficacious succor in money, large enough to be a foundation for substantial arrangements of finance, to revive public credit, and give vigor to future operations; 2dly, the vast importance of a decided effort of the allied arms on this continent, the ensuing campaign, to effectuate once for all the great objects of the alliance, the liberty and independence of these States. Without the first we may make a feeble and expiring effort the next campaign, in all probability the period to our opposition. With it, we should be in a condition to continue the war, as long as the obstinacy of the enemy might require. The first is essential to the latter; both combined would bring the contest to a glorious issue, crown the obligations, which America already feels to the magnanimity and generosity of her ally, and perpetuate the union by all the ties of gratitude and affection, as well as by the advantage which alone can render it solid and inviolable.

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9thly. That, next to a loan of money, a constant naval superiority on these coasts is the object most interesting. This would instantly reduce the enemy to a difficult defensive, and, by removing all prospect of extending their acquisitions, would take away the motives for prosecuting the war. Indeed, it is not to be conceived how they could subsist a large force in this country, if we had the command of the seas, to interrupt the regular transmission of supplies from Europe. This superiority (with an aid in money,) would enable us to convert the war into a vigorous offensive. I say nothing of the advantages to the trade of both nations, nor how infinitely it would facilitate our supplies. With respect to us, it seems to be one of *two* deciding points; and it appears, too, to be the interest of our allies, abstracted from the immediate benefits to this country, to transfer the naval war to America. The number of ports friendly to them, hostile to the British, the materials for repairing their disabled ships, the extensive supplies towards the subsistence of their fleet, are circumstances which would give them a palpable advantage in the contest of these seas.

10thly. That an additional succor in troops would be extremely desirable. Besides a reinforcement of numbers, the excellence of French troops, that perfect discipline and order in the corps already sent, which have so happily tended to improve the respect and confidence of the people for our allies, the conciliating disposition and the zeal for the service, which distinguish every rank, sure indications of lasting harmony,—all these considerations evince the immense utility of an accession of force to the corps now here. Correspondent with these motives, the enclosed minutes of a conference between their Excellencies the Count de Rochambeau, the Chevalier de Ternay, and myself will inform you, that an augmentation to fifteen thou-

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sand men was judged expedient for the next campaign; and it has been signified to me, that an application has been made to the court of France to this effect. But if the sending so large a succor in troops should necessarily diminish the pecuniary aid, which our allies may be disposed to grant, it were preferable to diminish the aid in men; for the same sum of money, which would transport from France and maintain here a body of troops with all the necessary apparatus, being put into our hands to be employed by us, would serve to give activity to a larger force within ourselves, and its influence would pervade the whole administration.

11thly. That no nation will have it more in its power to repay what it borrows than this. Our debts are hitherto small. The vast and valuable tracts of unlocated lands, the variety and fertility of climates and soils, the advantages of every kind which we possess for commerce, insure to this country a rapid advancement in population and prosperity, and a certainty, its independence being established, of redeeming in a short term of years the comparatively inconsiderable debts it may have occasion to contract.

That, notwithstanding the difficulties under which we labor, and the inquietudes prevailing among the people, there is still a fund of inclination and resource in the country, equal to great and continued exertions, provided we have it in our power to stop the progress of disgust, by changing the present system, and adopting another more consonant with the spirit of the nation, and more capable of activity and energy in public measures; of which a powerful succor of money must be the basis. The people are discontented; but it is with the feeble and oppressive mode of conducting the war, not with the war itself. They are not unwilling to contribute to its support, but they are unwilling to do it in a way that renders private prop-

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erty precarious; a necessary consequence of the fluctuation of the national currency, and of the inability of government to perform its engagements oftentimes coercively made. A large majority are still firmly attached to the independence of these States, abhor a reunion with Great Britain, and are affectionate to the alliance with France; but this disposition cannot supply the place of means customary and essential in war, nor can we rely on its duration amidst the perplexities, oppressions, and misfortunes, that attend the want of them.

A Letter of Acknowledgment

To Mrs. Sarah Bache

NEW WINDSOR, 15 January, 1781.

Dear Madam: I should have done myself the pleasure to acknowledge the receipt of the letter you did me the favor to write on the 26th of December, at the moment of its receipt, had not some affairs of a very unusual nature (which are too recent and notorious to require explanation), engaged my whole attention. I pray you now to be persuaded, that a sense of the patriotic exertions of yourself and the ladies, who have furnished so handsome and useful a gratuity for the army, at so critical and severe a season, will not easily be effaced, and that the value of the donation will be greatly enhanced by a consideration of the hands by which it was made and presented.

Amidst all the distresses and sufferings of the army, from whatever sources they have arisen, it must be a consolation to our *virtuous countrywomen*, that they have never been accused of withholding their most zealous efforts to support the cause we are engaged in, and encourage those

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who are defending them in the field. The army do not want gratitude, nor do they misplace it in this instance.

Although the friendship of your father may oblige him to see some things through too partial a medium, yet the indulgent manner in which he is pleased to express himself respecting me is indeed very pleasing; for nothing in human life can afford a liberal mind more rational and exquisite satisfaction, than the approbation of a wise, a great, and virtuous man. Mrs. Washington requests me to present her compliments to Mr. Bache and yourself, with which you will both be pleased to accept of mine, and believe me to be, with great consideration and esteem, dear Madam, &c.

Advice to a Young Senator

To John Park Custis

NEW WINDSOR, 28 February, 1781.

Dear Custis: If you will accept a hasty letter in return for yours of last month, I will devote a few moments to this purpose, and confine myself to an interesting point or two. I do not suppose, that so young a senator as you are, little versed in political disquisitions, can yet have much influence in a populous assembly, composed of Gentln. of various talents and of different views. But it is in your power to be punctual in your attendance (and duty to the trust reposed in you exacts it of you), to hear dispassionately and determine coolly all great questions. To be disgusted at the decision of questions, because they are not consonant to our own ideas, and to withdraw ourselves from public assemblies, or to neglect our attendance at them, upon suspicion that there is a party formed,

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who are inimical to our cause and to the true interest of our country, is wrong, because these things may originate in a difference of opinion; but, supposing the fact is otherwise, and that our suspicions are well founded, it is the indispensable duty of every patriot to counteract them by the most steady and uniform opposition. The advice is the result of information, that you and others being dissatisfied at the proceedings of Virginia Assembly, and thinking your attendance of little avail (as there is always a majority for measures, which you and a minority conceive to be repugnant to the interest of your Country), are indifferent about the Assembly.

Does not these things show, that in ye most striking point of view, the indispensable necessity, the great and good policy, of each State sending its ablest and best men to Congress; men, who have a perfect understanding of the constitution of their Country, of its policy, and interests; and of vesting that body with competent powers? Our Independence depends upon it, our respectability and consequence in Europe depends upon it, our greatness as a nation hereafter depends upon it. The fear of giving sufficient powers to Congress, for the purposes I have mentioned, is futile, without it our Independence fails and each Assembly, under its present constitution, will be annihilated, and we must once more return to the Government of G. Britain, and be made to kiss the rod preparing for our correction. A nominal head, which at present is but another name for Congress, will no longer do. That honorable body, after hearing the interests and views of the several States fairly discussed and explained by their respective representatives, must dictate, and not merely recommend and leave it to the States afterwards to do as they please, which, as I have observed before, is in many cases to do nothing at all.

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When I began this letter, I did not expect to have filled more than one side of the sheet, but I have run on insensibly. If you are at home, give my love to Nelly and the children; if at Richmond, present my compliments to any inquiring friends. I am sincerely and affectionately, &c.

P. S. The Public Gazette will give you all the news of this quarter—our eyes are anxiously towards the South for events.

On the Proposed Pension to his Mother

To Benjamin Harrison

NEW WINDSOR, 21 March, 1781.

My dear Sir: Upon my return to this place last night, I met your private and friendly letter of the 25th of February. I do not delay a moment to thank you for the interesting matter contained in it, and to express surprize at that part which respects a pension for my mother.

True it is, I am but little acquainted with her *present* situation of distresses, if she is under any. As true it is, a year or two before I left Virginia (to make her latter days comfortable and free from care) I did, at her request, but at my own expense, purchase a commodious house, garden and Lotts (of her own choosing) in Fredericksburg, that she might be near my sister Lewis, her only daughter,—and did moreover agree to take her land and negroes at a certain yearly rent, to be fixed by Colo. Lewis and others (of her own nomination) which has been an annual expence to me ever since, as the estate never raised one half the rent I was to pay. Before I left Virginia I answered all her calls for money; and since that period have directed my steward to do the same. Whence her

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distresses can arise, therefore, I know not, never received any complaint of his inattention or neglect that head; tho' his inability to pay my own taxes, &c. I know, as to oblige me to sell negroes for this purpose the taxes being the most unequal (I am told) in the world—some persons paying for things of equal value, four times, nay ten times, the rate that others do.—But putting these things aside, which I could not avoid mentioning in exculpation of a presumptive want of duty on my part; confident I am that she has not a child that would not divide the last sixpence to relieve her from *real* distress. This she has been repeatedly assured of by me; and all of us I am certain, would feel much hurt, at having our mother a pensioner, while we had the means of supporting her; but in fact she has an ample income of her own.

I lament accordingly that your letter, which conveyed the first hint of this matter, did not come to my hands sooner; but I request, in pointed terms, if the matter is now in agitation in your Assembly, that all proceedings on it may be stopped, or in case of a decision in her favor, that it may be done away and repealed at my request.

On Trust in Providence

To Major-General Armstrong

NEW WINDSOR, 26 March, 1781.

Dear Sir: We ought not to look back, unless it is to derive useful lessons from past errors, and for the purpose of profiting by dear bought experience. To enquire against things that are past and irremediable, is unpleasing; but to steer clear of the shelves and rocks we have struck upon, is the part of wisdom, equally as incumbent

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on political as other men, who have their own little bark, or that of others, to navigate through the intricate paths of life, or the trackless ocean, to the haven of security and rest.

Our affairs are brought to an awful crisis, that the hand of Providence, I trust, may be more conspicuous in our deliverance. The many remarkable interpositions of the divine government, in the hours of our deepest distress and darkness, have been too luminous to suffer me to doubt the happy issue of the present contest; but the period for its accomplishment may be too far distant for a person of my years, whose morning and evening hours, and every moment (unoccupied by business), pants for retirement, and for those domestic and rural enjoyments, which in my estimation far surpass the highest pageantry of this world.

A Letter of Reproof

To Lund Washington, at Mount Vernon

NEW WINDSOR, 30 April, 1781.

Dear Lund: I am very sorry to hear of your loss. I am a little sorry to hear of my own; but that which gives me most concern is, that you should go on board the enemy's vessels, and furnish them with refreshments. It would have been a less painful circumstance to me to have heard, that in consequence of your non-compliance with their request, that they had burnt my House and laid the Plantation in ruins. You ought to have considered yourself as my representative, and should have reflected on the bad example of communicating with the enemy, and making a voluntary offer of refreshments to them with a view to prevent a conflagration.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

It was not in your power, I acknowledge, to prevent them from sending a flag on shore, and you did right to meet it; but you should, in the same instant that the business of it was unfolded, have declared explicitly, that it was improper for you to yield to the request; after which, if they had proceeded to help themselves by force, you could but have submitted; (and, being unprovided for defence,) this was to be preferred to a feeble opposition, which only serves as a pretext to burn and destroy.

I am thoroughly persuaded, that you acted from your best judgment, and believe, that your desire to preserve my property, and rescue the buildings from impending danger, were your governing motives, but to go on board their vessels, carry them refreshments, commune with a parcel of plundering scoundrels, and request a favor by asking a surrender of my negroes, was exceedingly ill judged, and, 't is to be feared, will be unhappy in its consequences, as it will be a precedent for others, and may become a subject of animadversion.

I have no doubt of the enemy's intention to prosecute the plundering plan they have begun; and unless a stop can be put to it by the arrival of a superior naval force, I have as little doubt of its ending in the loss of all my negroes, and in the destruction of my Houses; but I am prepared for the event; under the prospect of which, if you could deposit in safety at some convenient distance from the water, the most valuable and least bulky articles, it might be consistent with policy and prudence, and a mean of preserving them hereafter. Such and so many things as are necessary for common and present use must be retained, and run their chance through the fiery trial of this summer. I am sincerely yours.

Mrs. Washington joins me in best and affectionate regard for you, Mrs. Washington and Milly Posey. I do

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

A Letter of Congratulation

To Major-General Greene

CAMP, BEFORE YORK, 6 October, 1781.

My Dear Sir: How happy am I, in at length having it in my power to congratulate you upon a victory as splendid as I hope it will prove important. Fortune must have been coy indeed, had she not yielded at last to so persevering a pursuer as you have been. I hope, now she is yours, that she will change her appellation of fickle to that of constant.

I can say with sincerity that I feel with the highest degree of pleasure the good effects, which you mention as resulting from the perfect good understanding between you, the Marquis, and myself. I hope it will never be interrupted, and I am sure it never can while we are all influenced by the same pure motive, that of love to our country and interest in the cause in which we are embarked. I have happily had but few differences with those, with whom I have the honor of being connected in the service. With whom, and of what nature these have been, you know. I bore much for the sake of peace and the public good. My conscience tells me, I acted rightly in these transactions; and, should they ever come to the knowledge of the world, I trust I shall stand acquitted by it.

LETTERS AND ADDRESSES

On the Surrender of Cornwallis

To the President of Congress

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEAR YORK,
19 October, 1781.

Sir: I have the honor to inform Congress, that a reduction of the British army, under the command of Lord Cornwallis, is most happily effected. The unremitted ardor, which actuated every officer and soldier in the combined army on this occasion, has principally led to this important event, at an earlier period than my most sanguine hopes had induced me to expect.

The singular spirit of emulation, which animated the whole army from the first commencement of our operations, has filled my mind with the highest pleasure and satisfaction, and had given me the happiest presages of success.

On the 17th instant, a letter was received from Lord Cornwallis, proposing a meeting of commissioners to consult on terms for the surrender of the posts of York and Gloucester. This letter (the first which had passed between us) opened a correspondence, a copy of which I do myself the honor to enclose; that correspondence was followed by the definitive capitulation, which was agreed to and signed on the 19th, a copy of which is also herewith transmitted and which, I hope, will meet the approbation of Congress.

I should be wanting in the feelings of gratitude, did I not mention on this occasion, with the warmest sense of acknowledgment, the very cheerful and able assistance, which I have received in the course of our operation from his Excellency the Count de Rochambeau and all his officers of every rank in their respective capacities. Nothing

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

could equal the zeal of our allies, but the emulating spirit of the American officers, whose ardor would not suffer their exertions to be exceeded.

The very uncommon degree of duty and fatigue, which the nature of the service required from the officers of engineers and artillery of both armies, obliges me particularly to mention the obligations I am under to the commanding and other officers of those corps.

I wish it was in my power to express to Congress, how much I feel myself indebted to the Count de Grasse and the officers of the fleet under his command, for the distinguished aid and support which has been afforded by them, between whom and the army the most happy concurrence of sentiments and views has subsisted, and from whom every possible coöperation has been experienced, which the most harmonious intercourse could afford.

On Naval Superiority

To the Marquis de Lafayette

MOUNT VERNON, VIRGINIA,

15 November, 1781.

I owe it to friendship and to my affectionate regard for you, my dear Marqs., not to let you leave this Country, without carrying with you fresh marks of my attachment to you, and new expressions of the high sense I entertain of your military conduct and other important services in the course of the last campaign, altho' the latter are too well known to need the testimony of my approbation, and the former I persuade myself you believe is too well riveted to undergo diminution or change.

As you expressed a desire to know my Sentiments re-

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LETTERS AND ADDRESSES

specting the operations of the next Campaign, before your departure for France, I will without a tedious display of reasoning declare in one word, that the advantages of it to America, and the honor and glory of it to the allied arms in these States must depend *absolutely* upon the naval force, which is employed in these Seas, and the time of its appearance next year. No land force can act decisively, unless it is accompanied by a maritime superiority; nor can more than negative advantages be expected without it. For proof of this, we have only to recur to the instances of the ease and facility with which the British shifted their ground, as advantages were to be obtained at either extremity of the continent, and to their late heavy loss the moment they failed in their naval superiority. To point out the further advantages, which might have been obtained in the course of this year, if Count de Grasse could have waited, and would have covered a further operation to the southward, is unnecessary; because a doubt did not exist nor does at this moment, in any man's mind, of the total extirpation of the British force in the Carolinas and Georgia, if he could have extended his coöperation two months longer.

It follows then as certain as that night succeeds the day, that without a decisive naval force we can do nothing definitive, and with it every thing honorable and glorious. A constant naval superiority would terminate the war speedily; without it, I do not know that it will ever be terminated honorably. If this force should appear early, we shall have the whole campaign before us. The months of June to September inclusive are well adapted for operating in any of the States to the northward of this; and the remaining months are equally well suited to those south of it; in which time, with such means, I think much, I will add every thing, might be expected.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

If I should be deprived of the pleasure of a personal interview with you before your departure, permit me my dear Marquis to adopt this method of making you a tender of my ardent Vows for a propitious voyage, a gracious reception from your Prince, an honorable reward of your services, a happy meeting with your lady and friends, and a safe return in the spring to, my dear Marqs., your affectionate friend, &c.

Acknowledgment of Congratulations

To the President of Congress

MOUNT VERNON, 15 November, 1781.

Sir: I have the honor to acknowledge the receipt of your favor of the 31st ultimo, covering the resolutions of Congress of 29th, and a proclamation for a day of public prayer and thanksgiving, and have to thank you, Sir, most sincerely for the very polite and affectionate manner in which these enclosures have been conveyed. The success of the combined Armies, against our enemies at York and Gloucester, as it affects the welfare and independence of the United States, I viewed as a most fortunate event. In performing my part towards its accomplishment, I consider myself to have done only my duty, and in the execution of that I ever feel myself happy; and at the same time, as it augurs well to our cause, I take a particular pleasure in acknowledging, that the interposing hand of Heaven, in the various instances of our extensive preparations for this operation, has been most conspicuous and remarkable.

LETTERS AND ADDRESSES

A Business Letter

To Benjamin Dulany

MOUNT VERNON, 17 November, 1781.

Sir: I learn from Mr. Lund Washington, that the land formerly belonging to Mr. Manley is again about to be offered for sale, and that you and I are like to be the only competitors in the purchase of it. That I often treated with Mr. Manley in his lifetime, and since his death with his executors for that tract is a fact which cannot be unknown to you; equally true is it, that if the Land is exposed to public sale, I shall bid for it, as far as *I* think it is worth, but no farther, and as men set different values upon the same thing according to the lights in which it strikes them, and their own mode of estimating its value, it is not at all unlikely but that you may be the purchaser. In the present case, however, I ever was, and still am willing to give the full value of the land; and as a proof of it, should have no objection to the price being fixed by three honest and judicious men, to be indifferently chosen. This I wou'd give.

Having premised this thing, the intention of this letter is to make you a proposition, and explain my motives for it; which, if acceded to, may smooth every difficulty, and prove convenient and beneficial to all parties. It is to purchase the reversion of your land in this neck, at the same time I make that of Mr. Manley's, if it is for sale. You are, doubtless, well acquainted with the circumstance of this tract, held by Mrs. French; but as no man can have a more perfect knowledge of it than I have, I think myself fully warranted in asserting that in less than ten years from this date, there will be no support to the planta-

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

tion, and that without the aid of my woodland, it cannot be maintained.

If my reasons are asked, I will add: that, to say nothing of the Plantation itself, great part of which is old and much worn, the present fencing cannot last long; that one half of the plantation at this moment is dependent upon me, for the means of enclosing it; that though I have not a disposition to be unneighborly, by depriving Mrs. French, or you, of the use of my fences, yet this may not be the case with those who follow me; that the woodland for fire and timber, bears no proportion to the quantity of cleared land; and, as has been observed before, will not support the plantation in these articles but a few years longer, especially if all those long lines of fencing which are furnished by me, should be shifted, as is very commonly the case where fields are changed; and, that to depend upon the fencing of another for inclosures, is working land upon a very uncertain tenure, and at too great a hazard to be warranted by prudence; as ill-nature, or even necessity may expose the crops.

That these are facts uncontrovertible, and the reasoning upon them conclusive, none can deny. I mention them to prove, first, that at the same time I discover an inclination to purchase the reversion of your land, I know what value to set on it; and secondly, as an indisputable evidence that sooner or later (if you cannot get some of my woodland) you will, for want of timber and firing, be obliged to part with it to those who have it. And that this must be done to a very great disadvantage, when the period of that necessity is absolutely felt, and the land is more exhausted, is evident to common sense.

It may be asked, why, under these disadvantages, I would choose to be the purchaser? The answer is plain,

LETTERS AND ADDRESSES

and I shall candidly give it to you: For besides having timber to supply all the wants of your land, it is my wish, altho' it shou'd not fall into my hands immediately, to have in expectation, by reversion, all the lands in this Neck, that I may without loss of time, proceed to the enclosing of it by a large ditch, and strong post rail fence on the outer boundary of it. This, Sir, and the prospect of having exclusive possession of the whole neck, I declare to you upon my honor, are my motives for buying. It is not the real want of land (for I have already more than I have hands to work) nor the extraordinary value of this tract that prompts me to the measure. From a full conviction that I cannot in the course of nature, remain long upon this theater, I have a desire to see such things as are within my reach, accomplished as soon as possible. On this principle it is, I shall go as far to purchase Mr. Manley's land as I can conceive it is worth. If the prospect of long life was before me, and I had a mind to play the politician, it would be my interest to let Mr. Manley's land fall into your hands without a single bid for it on my part; because having a scarcity of fencing yourself, and his land, I believe, not a stick of timber upon it, it would so much increase the demand upon the little you have, as to involve at an earlier period, the consequence I have foretold.

Having dealt thus freely and frankly in describing the true situation and circumstances of these lands, and my motives to purchase them, I shall conclude with repeating that I will take the land of Mr. Manley at the price any three honest and judicious men, indifferently chosen, shall fix upon it. That I will do the same thing with respect to yours, if you incline to sell, or if you will fix the price yourself (having a just regard to the quality and circumstances of the land) I will give it, without haggling; and allowance being made by men of judgment, conversant in

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

these things for Mrs. French's life, if she chooses to hold it.

I shall offer no apology for making you these proposals. My meaning is good, and my offers are generous. They will stand the test of examination; and it is my wish, that all the parties concerned (vizi. Mrs. Dulany, Mrs. French, and Mr. Triplet, executor of Mr. Manley) may be consulted. If my proposals and observations are good, they will be struck with the force of them; if they are not, my mistake arises from viewing things in a wrong point of view.

I persuade myself that there is too much liberality in your way of thinking to suppose, that because I have frankly declared my motives for making these proposals, and have made generous offers towards purchasing your land, that I shall set no bounds to my prices, in order to obtain it. I as frankly declare, that this is not my intention. I will give the full value, but no more. The whole tenor of my conduct hitherto in this business must have evinced this, but will more than probably convince Mr. Barry (or rather Mr. Wren his oracle) who was ever afraid to accept the price that was offered for his land, lest more could be had,—of the folly and impolicy of a narrow way of thinking, and give him cause, if I should withhold the same offer in future, to accompany it with repentance.

On Vermont Affairs

To Thomas Chittenden, Vermont

PHILADELPHIA, 1 January, 1782.

Sir: It is not my business, neither do I think it necessary now, to discuss the origin of the right of a number

LETTERS AND ADDRESSES

of inhabitants to that tract of country, formerly distinguished by the name of the New Hampshire Grants, and now known by that of Vermont. I will take it for granted, that their right was good, because Congress by their resolve of the 7th of August imply it, and by that of the 21st are willing fully to confirm it, provided the new State is confined to certain described bounds. It appears therefore to me, that the dispute of boundary is the only one which exists, and that, this being removed, all further difficulties would be removed also, and the matter terminated to the satisfaction of all parties.

You must consider, Sir, that the point now in dispute is of the utmost political importance to the future union and peace of this great country. The State of Vermont, if acknowledged, will be the first new one admitted into the confederacy, and, if suffered to encroach upon the ancient established boundaries of the adjacent ones, will serve as a precedent for others, which it may hereafter be expedient to set off, to make the same unjustifiable demands. Thus, in my private opinion, while it behooves the delegates of the States now confederated to do ample justice to a body of people sufficiently respectable by their numbers, and entitled by other claims to be admitted into that confederation, it becomes them also to attend to the interests of their constituents, and see, that, under the appearance of justice to one, they do not materially injure the rights of others. I am apt to think this is the prevailing opinion of Congress, and that your late extension of claim has, upon the principles I have above mentioned, rather diminished than increased the number of your friends, and that, if such extension should be persisted in, will be made a common cause, and not considered as only affecting the rights of the States immediately interested in the loss of territory, a loss of

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

too serious a nature not to claim the attention of any people.

There is no calamity within the compass of my foresight, which is more to be dreaded, than a necessity of coercion on the part of Congress; and consequently every endeavor should be used to prevent the execution of so disagreeable a measure. It must involve the ruin of that State against which the resentment of the others is pointed.

On Conciliation and United Action

To Major-General Schuyler

PHILADELPHIA, 6 February, 1782.

Dear Sir: My sentiments, in general, respecting the necessity of perfect unanimity among ourselves in order to give energy & decision to our collective efforts against the Enemy, are too well known to be insisted upon; for I have had frequent occasion to repeat, that it was my most fervent wish, that all grounds of jealousy and dispute between any districts of the Inhabitants of the United States, which were at variance might be removed by an amicable adjustment of their differences, and that, in my opinion, moderate measures (so long as they can be adopted with propriety) are much more likely than violent ones to produce such a salutary effect—if therefore my public advice in my late circular Letter, or my private opinion, which has been given without reserve on every occasion can be of any avail, I am confident the consideration of all other matters would be swallowed up in or made subservient to the general good of the whole—but as it has ever been a point of delicacy with me, while acting only in a military character, not to interfere in the civil Con-

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cerns of the Continent or the Legislatures, except where they are intimately connected with Military matters, I should not think myself at liberty, without deviating from that rule, to intermeddle so far as to dictate particular modes of accommodation (however earnestly I desire it may be effected) especially on a subject which has been under the immediate consideration of Congress itself; whose directions, it is my duty as well as inclination to be guided by.—

A Call to Vigorous Action

To James McHenry

PHILADELPHIA, 12 March, 1782.

My dear Sir: The fair hand, to whom your letter of the 20th of January was committed, presented it safe, and as you very truly observed, the value of it was enhanced by it. Good laws, ample means, and sufficient powers, may render the birth of your intendant a public benefit; and, from the spirit of your people, I hope these are provided. Without them, the appointment must be nugatory. Never, since the commencement of the present revolution, has there been in my judgment a period, when vigorous measures were more consonant to sound policy than the present. The speech of the British King, and the addresses of the Lords and Commons, are proofs as clear as Holy Writ to me of two things;—their wishes to prosecute the American war, and their fears of the consequences. My opinion, therefore, of the matter is, that the minister will obtain supplies for the current year, prepare vigorously for another campaign, and then prosecute the war, or treat of peace, as circumstances and fortuitous events may justify; and that nothing will contribute more to the first, than a

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

relaxation or apparent supineness on the part of these States. The debates upon the addresses evidently prove, what I have here advanced, to be true; for according to the explanation of them, [they] are meant to answer any purpose the ministers may have in view. What madness then can be greater, or policy and economy worse, than to let the enemy again rise upon our folly and want of exertion? Shall we not be justly chargeable for all the blood and treasure, which shall be wasted in a lingering war, procrastinated by false expectations of peace, or timid measures for prosecuting the war? Surely we shall; and much it is to be lamented, that our endeavors do not at all times accord with our wishes. Each State is anxious to see the end of our warfare, but shrinks when it is called upon for the means to accomplish it; and either withholds altogether, or grants them in such a manner as to defeat the end. Such, it is to be feared, will be the case in many instances respecting the requisitions of men and money.

A Dishonest Agent

To John P. Posey

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEWBURGH,

7 August, 1782.

Sir: With a mixture of surprize, concern, and even horror, have I heard of your treatment of the deceased Mr. Custis; in the abuse in misapplication of the estate which he had committed—with much confidence I am sure, and I believe personal regard—to your management.

If what I have heard, or the half of it be true, you must not only be lost to the feelings of virtue, honor, and common honesty—but you must have suffered an unwarrantable thirst of gain to lead you into errors which are so

LETTERS AND ADDRESSES

pregnant with folly and indiscretion, as to render you a mark of every man's arrow to level at. Can you suppose, Sir, that a manager can dissipate his Employer's Estate with impunity? That there are not Laws in every free country by which Justice is to be obtained?—or that the Heirs of Mr. Custis will not find friends who will pursue you to the end of the Earth in order to come at it? If you do, you are proceeding upon exceedingly mistaken principles—but, for a moment only, let us suppose that you have taken the advantage of an unsuspecting friend—for such I am sure Mr. Custis was *to you*, and that you have acted so covertly, as to elude the Law; do you believe that in the hours of cool reflection—in the moment perhaps, when you shall find that illgotten pelf can no longer avail you; that your conscience will not smite you for such complicated iniquity as arises not only from acts of injustice but the horrors of ingratitude; in abusing the confidence of a man who supposed you incapable of deceiving him, who was willing, and I believe did, in a great degree, commit his whole property to your care?

But this by the by—I do not mean to put this matter upon the footing of conscience. Conscience might have been kicked out of doors before you could have proceeded to the length of selling another man's negroes for your own emolument, and this too after having applied the greatest part, or the whole of the profits of his Estate to your benefit.—Conscience again seldom comes to man's aid while he is in the zenith of health, and revelling in pomp and luxury upon illgotten spoils. It is generally the *last* act of his life, and comes too late to be of much service to others here, or to himself hereafter. But, Sir, the footing I expect to see you put this matter upon is, to settle without delay, such acc'ts with the administrator of Mr. Custis's Estate, whose duty it is to have it done,

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

as you can support by authentic vouchers—That you will show what authority you have sold any of his negroes and to what purposes the money has been applied—and lastly, what crops you have made, what stocks you have raised, and how they have been disposed of. A settlement of this kind, altho' it should appear by it that you have applied the greatest part, or even the whole of the money arising from the sales of them, to your own purposes, will be the next best thing to never having committed the wrong. How far Mr. Dandridge, as an Administrator, may chuse to push matters, I cannot undertake (never having heard from him on the subject) to say—but this you may *rely on*, that this affair shall be most critically investigated, and probed to the bottom; let the trouble and cost of doing it be what it may—as a man therefore who wishes for your own sake as well as that of an injured family, to see you act properly, I advise, and warn you of the consequences of a contrary conduct, being, Sir, yr. most h'ble Serv't.

On the Grievances of the Officers

To the Secretary at War

HEAD-QUARTERS, 2 October, 1782.

My dear Sir: Painful as the task is to describe the dark side of our affairs, it sometimes becomes a matter of indispensable necessity. Without disguise or palliation, I will inform you candidly of the discontents, which at this moment prevail universally throughout the army.

The complaint of evils, which they suppose almost remediless, are the total want of money or the means of existing from one day to another, the heavy debts they have already incurred, the loss of credit, the distress of their

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families (i. e. such as are married) at home, and the prospect of poverty and misery before them. It is vain, Sir, to suppose, that military men will acquiesce contentedly with bare rations, when those in the civil walk of life, (unacquainted with half the hardships they endure,) are regularly paid the emoluments of office. While the human mind is influenced by the same passions, and have ye same inclinations to indulge, it cannot be. A military man has the same turn to sociability as a person in civil life. He conceives himself equally called upon to live up to his rank, and his pride is hurt when circumstances restrain him. Only conceive, then, the mortification they (even the general officers) must suffer, when they cannot invite a French officer, a visiting friend, or a travelling acquaintance, to a better repast, than stinking whiskey (and not always that) and a bit of Beef without vegetables will afford them.

The officers also complain of other hardships, which they think might and ought to be remedied without delay; such as the stopping promotions, where there have been vacancies open for a long time; the withholding commissions from those who are justly entitled to them, and have warrants or certificates of their appointments from the executive of their States; and particularly the leaving the compensation for their services in a loose, equivocal state, without ascertaining their claims upon the public, or making provision for the future payment of them.

While I premise, that tho' no one I have seen or heard of appears opposed to the principle of reducing the army as circumstances may require, yet I cannot help fearing the result of the measure in contemplation, under present circumstances, when I see such a number of men, goaded by a thousand stings of reflection on the past and of anticipation on the future, about to be turned into the world, soured by penury and what they call the ingratitude of the pub-

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

lic, involved in debts without one farthing of money to carry them home, after having spent the flower of their days, and many of them their patrimonies, in establishing the freedom and independence of their country, and suffered everything human nature is capable of enduring on this side of death. I repeat it, in these irritable circumstances, without one thing to soothe their feelings or brighten the gloomy prospects, I cannot avoid apprehending that a train of evils will follow, of a very serious and distressing nature. On the other hand, could the officers be placed in as good a situation, as when they came into service, the contention, I am persuaded, would be, not who should continue in the field, but who should retire to private life.

I wish not to heighten the shades of the picture so far as the real life would justify me in doing, or I would give anecdotes of patriotism and distress, which have scarcely ever been paralleled, never surpassed in the history of mankind. But, you may rely upon it, the patience and long-sufferance of this army are almost exhausted, and that there never was so great a spirit of discontent as at this instant. While in the field, I think it may be kept from breaking out in acts of outrage; but when we retire into winter-quarters, (unless the storm is previously dissipated,) I cannot be at ease respecting the consequences. It is high time for a peace.

A Letter of Counsel

To Bushrod Washington

NEWBURGH, 15 January, 1783.

Dear Bushrod: You will be surprised, perhaps, at receiving a letter from me; but if the end is answered for

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which it is written, I shall not think my time misspent. Your father, who seems to entertain a very favorable opinion of your prudence, and I hope you merit it, in one or two of his letters to me speaks of the difficulty he is under to make you remittances. Whether this arises from the scantiness of his funds, or the extensiveness of your demands, is matter of conjecture with me. I hope it is not the latter; because common prudence, and every other consideration, which ought to have weight in a reflecting mind, is opposed to your requiring more than his conveniency, and a regard to his other children will enable him to pay; and because he holds up no idea in his Letter, which would support me in the conclusion. Yet when I take a view of the inexperience of youth, the temptations in and vices of cities, and the distresses to which our Virginia gentlemen are driven by an accumulation of taxes and the want of a market, I am almost inclined to ascribe it in part to both. Therefore, as a friend, I give you the following advice.

Let the object, which carried you to Philadelphia, be always before your Eyes. Remember, that it is not the mere study of the Law, but to become eminent in the profession of it, which is to yield honor and profit. The first was your choice; let the second be your ambition, and that dissipation is incompatible with both; that the Company, in which you will improve most, will be least expensive to you; and yet I am not such a Stoic as to suppose that you will, or to think it right that you should, always be in Company with senators and philosophers; but of the young and juvenile kind let me advise you to be choice. It is easy to make acquaintances, but very difficult to shake them off, however irksome and unprofitable they are found, after we have once committed ourselves to them. The indiscretions and scrapes, which very often they in-

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voluntarily lead one into, prove equally distressing and disgraceful.

Be courteous to all, but intimate with few; and let those few be well tried before you give them your confidence. True friendship is a plant of slow growth, and must undergo and withstand the shocks of adversity before it is entitled to the appellation.

Let your *heart* feel for the afflictions and distresses of every one, and let your *hand* give in proportion to your purse; remembering always the estimation of the widow's mite, but, that it is not every one who asketh that deserveth charity; all, however, are worthy of the inquiry, or the deserving may suffer.

Do not conceive that fine clothes make fine men any more than fine feathers make fine Birds. A plain genteel dress is more admired and obtains more credit than lace and embroidery, in the Eyes of the judicious and sensible.

The last thing, which I shall mention, is first in importance; and that is, to avoid Gaming. This is a vice which is productive of every possible evil; equally injurious to the morals and health of its votaries. It is the child of avarice, the brother of iniquity, and father of mischief. It has been the ruin of many worthy familys, the loss of many a man's honor, and the cause of Suicide. To all those who enter the lists, it is equally fascinating. The successful gamester pushes his good fortune, till it is overtaken by a reverse. The losing gamester, in hopes of retrieving past misfortunes, goes on from bad to worse, till grown desperate he pushes at everything and loses his all. In a word, few gain by this abominable practice, (the profit if any being diffused) while thousands are injured.

Perhaps you will say, "My conduct has anticipated the advice," and "Not one of these cases applies to me." I shall be heartily glad of it. It will add not a little to

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my happiness, to find those to whom I am nearly connected pursuing the right walk of life. It will be the sure road to my favor, and those honors and places of profit, which their Country can bestow; as merit rarely goes unrewarded. I am, dear Bushrod, your affectionate uncle.

An Admonition

To Major Thomas Lansdale

NEWBURG, 25 January, 1783.

Sir: I was hurt yesterday at the appearance of the Detachment under your Command, as I conceive you must have been, if you viewed and drew a comparison between it and the Regiment on your Left. The Clothes of the latter have been upon the Soldiers backs almost, if not quite, twelve months,—while it is scarce Six since any part of yours has been issued.

Dirt and Trash too, of every denomination was so liberally strewed, even upon your parade, and immediately before the doors of your Hutts, that it was difficult to avoid the Filth.

The true distinction, Sir, between what is called a fine Regiment, and an indifferent one will ever, upon investigation, be found to originate in, and depend upon the care, or the inattention, of the Officers belonging to them.—That Regiment whose Officers are watchful of their men, and attentive to their wants, who will see that proper use is made, and a proper account taken of whatever is drawn for them; and that Regimental and Company Inspections are frequent in order to examine into the state of their Arms, ammunition, Clothing, and other necessities to prevent loss or embezzlement;—who will see that the Soldiers

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Clothes are well made, kept whole, and clean; that their Huts are swept and purified; that the Trash, and all kinds of Offal is either burnt or buried; that Vaults or proper necessaries are erected and every person punished who shall on those occasions go elsewhere in Camp; that their Provision is in good order well cooked and eat at proper hours;—those Officers, I say, who attend to these things—and their duty strictly enjoins it on them—give health, comfort, and a Military pride to their Men, which fires and fits them for every thing great and noble. It is by this means the character of a Regiment is exalted while sloth, inattention, and neglect produce the reverse of these in every particular and must infallibly lessen the reputation of the Corps.

I observed with concern that none of your officers had espontoons, that some of them were even without side arms; and of those that had, some were so remiss in their duty as not to know they were to salute with them. From these considerations I am led to point you to the Genl. Orders of the 9th of August and 1st of September, and to recommend in pointed terms to your Officers the necessity and advantage of making themselves perfectly masters of the Printed “Regulations for the Order and Discipline of the Troops of the United States.” Ignorance of them cannot, nor will it be any excuse, while it may bring disgrace on the Corps they belong to and produce much confusion in the army if they should form and manoeuvre with it.—

As it is the first time I have seen them under Arms, and some allowance is to be made for the rawness of the Corps, I will substitute admonition in place of reprehension—but it is my desire that you should inform the officers I shall expect to see a very great alteration in the police of the Corps and appearance of the Men before the next Inspection.

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The soldiers of your detachment, with a few exceptions, would look very well in the line of the Army if their Clothes were in good order, well fitted, and the Men made to appear neat and clean.

On His Position as a Soldier and a Citizen

To Alexander Hamilton, in Congress

NEWBURG, 4 March, 1783.

Dear Sir: To you, who have seen the danger, to which the army has been exposed, to a political dissolution for want of subsistence, and the unhappy spirit of licentiousness, which it imbibed by becoming in one or two instances its own proveditors, no observations are necessary to evince the fatal tendency of such a measure; but I shall give it as my opinion, that it would at this day be productive of civil commotions and end in blood. Unhappy situation this! God forbid we should be involved in it.

The predicament, in which I stand as Citizen and soldier, is as critical and delicate as can well be conceived. It has been the subject of many contemplative hours. The suffering of a complaining army on one hand, and the inability of Congress and tardiness of the States on the other, are the forebodings of evil and may be productive of events, which are more to be deprecated than prevented. But I am not without hope, if there is such a disposition shown, as prudence and policy will dictate, to do justice, that your apprehensions in case of Peace are greater than there is cause for. In this, however, I may be mistaken, if those ideas, which you have been informed are propagating in the army, should be extensive; the source of which may be easily traced, as the old leaven *it is said*, for I have no

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Proof of it, is again beginning to work under a mask of **the** perfect dissimulation and apparent cordiality.

Be these things as they may, I shall pursue the same steady line of conduct, which has governed me hitherto; fully convinced, that the sensible and discerning part of the army cannot be unacquainted, (altho' I never took pains to inform them), with the services I have rendered it on more occasions than one. This, and pursuing the suggestions in your letter, which I am happy to find coincides with my practice for several months past (which has turned the business of the army into the Channel it now is), leaves me under no *great* apprehension of its exceeding the bounds of reason and moderation, notwithstanding the prevailing sentiment there is, that the prospect of compensation for past services will terminate with the war.

The just claims of the army ought, and it is to be hoped will have their weight with every sensible legislature in the United States, if Congress point to their demands, and show, if case is so, the reasonableness of them, and the impracticability of complying with them without their aid. In any other point of view, it would in my opinion be impolitic to introduce the army on the Tapis, lest it should excite jealousy and bring on its concomitants. The States cannot surely be so devoid of common sense, common honesty, and common policy, as to refuse their aid on a full, clear, and candid representation of facts from Congress; more especially if these should be enforced by their own body, who might demonstrate what the inevitable consequences of failure will lead to.

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On Danger in Further Injustice to the Officers

To Joseph Jones, in Congress

NEWBURG, 18 March, 1783.

Dear Sir: The storm, which seemed to be gathering with unfavorable prognostics when I wrote to you last, is dispersed, and we are again in a state of tranquillity. But do not, my dear Sir, suffer this appearance of tranquillity to relax your endeavors to bring the requests of the army to an issue. Believe me, the officers are too much pressed by their present wants, and rendered too sore by the recollection of their past sufferings, to be touched much longer upon the string of forbearance, in matters wherein they can see no cause for delay; nor would I have further reliance placed upon any influence of mine to dispel other clouds, if any should arise from the causes of the last.

By my official Letter to Congress, and the Papers enclosed in it, you will have a full view of my assurances to, and the expectations of, the army; and I persuade myself, that the well-wishers to both and of their Country will exert themselves to the utmost to eradicate the Seeds of distrust, and give every satisfaction that justice requires, and the means which Congress possess will enable them to do.

In a former letter I observed to you, that a liquidation of accts., in order the ballances might be ascertained, is the great object of the army; and certainly nothing can be more reasonable. To have these ballances discharged at this or in any short time, however desirable, they know is impracticable, and do not expect it; although in the meantime they must labor under the pressure of these suffer-

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ings, which is felt more sensibly by a comparison of circumstances.

The situation of these Gentlemen merits the attention of every thinking and grateful mind. As officers, they have been *obliged* to dress and appear in character, to effect which they have been *obliged* to anticipate their pay, or participate their Estates. By the former, debts have been contracted; by the latter, their patrimony is injured. To disband men, therefore, under these circumstances, before their accts. are liquidated and the ballances ascertained, would be to set open the doors of the Goals, and then to shut them upon seven years of faithful and painful services. Under any circumstances, which the nature of the case will admit, they must be considerable sufferers; because necessity will compel them to part with their certificates for whatever they will fetch, to avoid the evil I have mentioned above; and how much this will place them in the hands of unfeeling, avaracious speculators, a recurrence to past experience will sufficiently prove.

It may be said by those, who have no disposition to compensate the Services of the army, that the officers have too much penetration to place dependence (in any alternative), upon the strength of their own arm. I will readily concede to these gentlemen, that no good could result from such an attempt; but I hope they will be equally candid in acknowledging, that much mischief may flow from it; and that nothing is too extravagant to expect from men, who conceive they are ungratefully and unjustly dealt by; especially too, if they can suppose that characters are not wanting to foment every passion, which leads to discord, and that there are—but time shall reveal the rest.

Let it suffice, that the very attempt wd. imply a want of justice, and fix an indelible stain upon our national

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character; as the whole world, as well from the enemy's publications (without any intention to serve us), as our own, must be strongly impressed with the sufferings of this army from hunger, cold, and nakedness, in almost every stage of the war.

On Danger in Further Injustice to the Soldiers

To Lund Washington

NEWBURG, 19 March, 1783.

Dear Lund: I did not write to you by the post. I was too much engaged at the time, in counteracting a most insidious attempt to disturb the repose of the army, and sow the seeds of discord between the civil and military powers of the continent, to attend to small matters. The author of this attempt, whoever he may be, is yet behind the curtain; and conjectures might be wrong, I shall be silent at present. The good sense, the virtue and patient forbearance of the army on this, as upon every other trying occasion which has happened to call them into action, has again triumphed; and appeared with more lustre than ever. But if the States will not furnish the supplies required by Congress, thereby enabling the Superintendent of Finance to feed, clothe, and pay the army, if they suppose the war can be carried on without money, or that money can be borrowed without permanent funds to pay the interest of it; if they have no regard to justice, because it is attended with expence; if gratitude to men, who have rescued them from the jaws of danger and brought them to the haven of Independence and Peace, is to subside, as danger is removed; if the sufferings of the army, who have borne and forborne more than any other class of men

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in the United States, expending their health, and many of them their all, in an unremitted service of near eight years in the field; encountering hunger, cold and nakedness, are to be forgotten; if it is presumed there is no bounds to the patience of the army; or that when peace takes place, their claims for pay due, and rewards promised may die with the military non-existence of its member—if such, I say, should be the sentiments of the States, and that their conduct, or the conduct of some, does but too well warrant the conclusion, well may another anonymous addresser step forward, and with more effect than the last did, say with him, “You have arms in your hands; to do justice to yourselves, and never sheath the sword, till you have obtained it.” How far men who labor under the pressure of accumulated distress, and are irritated by a belief that they are treated with neglect, ingratitude and injustice in the extreme might be worked upon by designing men, is worthy of very serious consideration. But justice, policy, yea common sense must tell every man that the creditors of the continent cannot receive payments unless funds are provided for it, and that our national character, if these are much longer neglected, must be stamped with indelible infamy in every nation of the world where the fact is known.

On State Jealousy and Firmer Union

To Alexander Hamilton, in Congress

NEWBURG, 31 March, 1783.

Dear Sir: I rejoice most exceedingly that there is an end to our warfare, and that such a field is opening to our view, as will, with wisdom to direct the cultivation of

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it, make us a great, a respectable, and happy people; but it must be improved by other means than State politics, and unreasonable jealousies and prejudices, or (it requires not the second sight to see that) we shall be instruments in the hands of our enemies, and those European powers, who may be jealous of our greatness in union, to dissolve the confederation. But, to obtain this, although the way seems extremely plain, is not so easy.

My wish to see the union of these States established upon liberal and permanent principles, and inclination to contribute my mite in pointing out the defects of the present constitution, are equally great. All my private letters have teemed with these sentiments, and, whenever this topic has been the subject of conversation, I have endeavored to diffuse and enforce them; but how far any further essay by me might be productive of the wished-for end, or appear to arrogate more than belongs to me, depends so much upon popular opinions, and the temper and dispositions of the people, that it is not easy to decide. I shall be obliged to you, however, for the thoughts, which you promised me on this subject, and as soon as you can make it convenient.

No man in the United States is or can be more deeply impressed with the necessity of a reform in our present confederation than myself. No man perhaps has felt the bad effects of it more sensibly; for to the defects thereof, and want of powers in Congress, may justly be ascribed the prolongation of the war, and consequently the expenses occasioned by it. More than half the perplexities I have experienced in the course of my command, and almost the whole of the difficulties and distress of the army, have their origin here. But still, the prejudices of some, the designs of others, and the mere machinery of the majority, make address and management necessary to give weight to opin-

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ions, which are to combat the doctrines of those different classes of men in the field of politics.

On the Future of the United States

To Dr. William Gordon

HEAD-QUARTERS, NEWBURG, 8 July, 1783.

Dear Sir: It now rests with the Confederated Powers, by the line of conduct they mean to adopt, to make this Country great, happy, and respectable; or to sink it into littleness—worse perhaps—into Anarchy and confusion; for certain I am, unless adequate Powers are given to Congress for the *general* purposes of the Federal Union, that we shall soon moulder into dust and become contemptible in the eyes of Europe, if we are not made the sport of their Politicks. To suppose that the general concerns of this Country can be directed by thirteen heads, or one head without competent powers, is a solecism, the bad effects of which every man who has had the practical knowledge to judge from, that I have, is fully convinced of; tho' none perhaps has felt them in so forcible and distressing a degree. The People at large, and at a distance from the theatre of action, who only know that the machine was kept in motion, and that they are at last arrived at the first object of their wishes, are satisfied with the event, without investigating the cause of the slow progress to it, or of the expences which have accrued, and which they have been unwilling to pay—great part of which has arisen from that want of energy in the Federal Constitution, which I am complaining of, and which I wish to see given to it by a Convention of the People, instead of hearing it remarked that, as we have worked through an

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arduous contest with the powers Congress already have (but which, by the by, have been gradually diminishing,) why should they be invested with more?

To say nothing of the invisible workings of Providence, which has conducted us through difficulties where no human foresight could point the way; it will appear evident to a close examiner, that there has been a concatenation of causes to produce this event; which in all probability, at no time, or under any other circumstances, will combine again—We deceive ourselves therefore by the mode of reasoning, and, what would be much worse, we may bring ruin upon ourselves by attempting to carry it into practice.

We are known by no other character among nations than as the United States—Massachusetts or Virginia is no better defined, nor any more thought of by Foreign Powers than the County of Worcester in Massachusetts is by Virginia, or Gloucester County in Virginia is by Massachusetts, (respectable as they are); and yet these counties with as much propriety might oppose themselves to the Laws of the State in which they are, as an Individual State can oppose itself to the Federal Government, by which it is, or ought to be bound. Each of these counties has, no doubt, its local polity and Interests. These should be attended to, and brought before their respective legislatures with all the force their importance merits; but when they come in contact with the general Interest of the State, when superior considerations preponderate in favor of the whole, their voices should be heard no more. So should it be with individual States when compared to the Union, otherwise I think it may properly be asked for what purpose do we farcically pretend to be United? Why do Congress spend months together in deliberating upon, debating, and digesting plans, which are made as palatable, and as wholesome to the Constitution

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of this country as the nature of things will admit of, when some States will pay no attention to them, and others regard them but partially; by which means all those evils which proceed from delay, are felt by the whole; while the compliant States are not only suffering by these neglects, but in many instances are injured most capitally by their own exertions; which are wasted for want of the united effort. A hundred thousand men, coming one after another, cannot move a Ton weight; but the united strength of 50 would transport it with ease. So it has been with great part of the expence which has been incurred this War. In a word, I think the blood and treasure, which has been spent in it, has been lavished to little purpose, unless we can be better cemented; and that is not to be effected while so little attention is paid to the recommendations of the Sovereign Power.

To me it would seem not more absurd, to hear a traveller, who was setting out on a long journey, declare he would take no money in his pocket to defray the Expences of it, but rather depend upon Chance and Charity, lest he should misapply it—than are the expressions of so much fear of the powers and means of Congress.

For Heavens sake, who are Congress? are they not the creatures of the People, amenable to them for their conduct, and dependent from day to day on their breath? Where then can be the danger of giving them such Powers as are adequate to the great ends of Government, and to all the general purposes of the Confederation (I repeat the word *general*, because I am no advocate for their having to do with the particular policy of any state, further than it concerns the Union at large)? What may be the consequences if they have not these Powers, I am at no loss to guess; and deprecate the worst; for sure I am, we shall, in a little time become as contemptible in the great

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scale of Politicks, as we now have it in our power to be respectable. And that, when the band of Union gets once broken, everything ruinous to our future prospects is to be apprehended. The best that can come of it, in my humble opinion is, that we shall sink into obscurity, unless our Civil broils should keep us in remembrance and fill the page of history with the direful consequences of them.

You say that, Congress loose time by pressing a mode that does not accord with the genius of the People, and will thereby, endanger the Union, and that it is the quantum they want. Permit me to ask if the quantum has not already been demanded? Whether it has been obtained? and whence proceeds the accumulated evils, and poignant distresses of many of the public Creditors—particularly in the Army? For my own part I hesitate not a moment to confess, that I see nothing wherein the Union is endangered by the late requisition of that body, but a prospect of much good, justice, and prosperity from the compliance with it. I know of no tax more convenient, none so agreeable, as that which every man may pay,—or let it alone, as his convenience, abilities, or Inclination shall prompt. I am therefore a warm friend to the impost.

A Letter of Compliment

To Mrs. Richard Stockton

ROCKY HILL, 2 September, 1783.

You apply to me, dear Madam, for absolution as tho' I was your father Confessor; and as tho' you had committed a crime, great in itself, yet of the venial class. You have reason good—for I find myself strangely disposed to be a very indulgent ghostly adviser on this occa-

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sion; and, notwithstanding "you are the most offending Soul alive" (that is, if it is a crime to write elegant Poetry,) yet if you will come and dine with me on Thursday, and go thro' the proper course of penitence which shall be prescribed, I will strive hard to assist you in expiating these poetical trespasses on this side of purgatory. Nay more, if it rests with me to direct your future lucubrations, I shall certainly urge you to a repetition of the same conduct, on purpose to shew what an admirable knack you have at confession and reformation; and so without more hesitation, I shall venture to command the muse, not to be restrained by ill-grounded timidity, but to go on and prosper.—You see, Madam, when once the woman has tempted us, and we have tasted the forbidden fruit, there is no such thing as checking our appetites, whatever the consequences may be. You will, I dare say, recognize our being the genuine Descendents of those who are reputed to be our great Progenitors.

Before I come to the more serious conclusion of my Letter—I must beg leave to say a word or two about these fine things you have seen telling in such harmonious and beautiful numbers. Fiction is to be sure the very life and Soul of Poetry—all Poets and Poetesses have been indulged in the free and indisputable use of it, time out of mind. And to oblige you to make such an excellent Poem on such a subject, without any materials but those of simple reality, would be as cruel as the Edict of Pharoah which compelled the children of Israel to manufacture Bricks without the necessary Ingredients.

Thus you are sheltered under the authority of prescription, and I will not dare to charge you with an intentional breach of the Rules of the decalogue in giving so bright a coloring to the services I have been enabled to render my Country; tho' I am not conscious of deserving

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any thing more at your hands, than what the purest and most disinterested friendship has a right to claim; actuated by which, you will permit me, to thank you in the most affectionate manner for the kind wishes you have so happily expressed for me and the partner of all my Domestic enjoyments—

Advice on Matrimony

To Lund Washington

ROCKY HILL, 20 September, 1783.

Dear Lund: Mrs. Custis has never suggested in any of her letters to Mrs. Washington (unless ardent wishes for her return, that she might then disclose it to her, can be so construed) the most distant attachment to D[avid] S[tuart]; but, if this should be the case, and she wants advice upon it, a father and mother, who are at hand and competent to give it, are at the same time the most proper to be consulted on so interesting an event. For my own part, I never did, nor do I believe I ever shall, give advice to a woman, who is setting out on a matrimonial voyage; first, because I never could advise one to marry without her own consent; and, secondly, I know it is to no purpose to advise her to refrain, when she has obtained it. A woman very rarely asks an opinion or requires advice on such an occasion, till her resolution is formed; and then it is with the hope and expectation of obtaining a sanction, not that she means to be governed by your disapprobation, that she applies. In a word, the plain English of the application may be summed up in these words; "I wish you to think as I do; but, if unhappily you differ from me in opinion, my heart, I must confess, is fixed, and I have gone too far *now* to retract."

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If Mrs. Custis should ever suggest any thing of this kind to me, I will give her my opinion of the *measure*, not of the *man*, with candor, and to the following effect. "I never expected you would spend the residue of your days in widowhood; but in a matter so important, and so interesting to yourself, children, and connexions, I wish you would make a prudent choice. To do which, many considerations are necessary; such as the family and connexions of the man, his fortune (which is not the *most* essential in my eye), the line of conduct he has observed, and disposition and frame of his mind. You should consider what prospect there is of his proving kind and affectionate to you; just, generous, and attentive to your children; and how far his connexions will be agreeable to you; for when they are once formed, agreeable or not, the die being cast, your fate is fixed." Thus far, and no farther, I shall go in my opinions.

Farewell Orders to the Armies of the United States

ROCKY HILL, NEAR PRINCETON,
[Sunday] 2 November, 1783.

The United States in Congress assembled, after giving the most honorable testimony to the federal armies, and presenting them with the thanks of their country for their long, eminent and faithful services, having thought proper, by their proclamation bearing date the 18th day of October last, to discharge such part of the troops as were engaged for the war, and to permit the officers on furlough to retire from services from and after to-morrow; which proclamation having been communicated in the public papers for the information and government of all concerned, it only

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remains for the Commander-in-chief to address himself once more, and that for the last time, to the armies of the United States (however widely dispersed the individuals who compose them may be), and to bid them an affectionate, a long farewell.

But before the Commander-in-chief takes final leave of those he holds most dear, he wishes to indulge himself a few moments in calling to mind a slight review of the past. He will then take the liberty of exploring with his military friends their future prospects, of advising the general line of conduct, which, in his opinion, ought to be pursued; and he will conclude the address by expressing the obligations he feels himself under for the spirited and able assistance he has experienced from them, in the performance of an arduous office.

A contemplation of the complete attainment (at a period earlier than could have been expected) of the object, for which we contended against so formidable a power, cannot but inspire us with astonishment and gratitude. The disadvantageous circumstances on our part, under which the war was undertaken, can never be forgotten. The singular interpositions of Providence in our feeble condition were such, as could scarcely escape the attention of the most unobserving; while the unparalleled perseverance of the armies of the United States, through almost every possible suffering and discouragement for the space of eight long years, was little short of a standing miracle.

It is not the meaning nor within the compass of this address, to detail the hardship peculiarly incident to our service, or to describe the distresses, which in several instances have resulted from the extremes of hunger and nakedness, combined with the rigors of an inclement season; nor is it necessary to dwell on the dark side of our past affairs. Every American officer and soldier must now

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console himself for any unpleasant circumstances, which may have occurred, by a recollection of the uncommon scenes in which he has been called to act no inglorious part, and the astonishing events of which he has been a witness; events which have seldom, if ever before, taken place on the stage of human action; nor can they probably ever happen again. For who has before seen a disciplined army formed at once from such raw materials? Who, that was not a witness, could imagine, that the most violent local prejudices would cease so soon; and that men, who came from the different parts of the continent, strongly disposed by the habits of education to despise and quarrel with each other, would instantly become but one patriotic band of brothers? Or who, that was not on the spot, can trace the steps by which such a wonderful revolution has been effected, and such a glorious period put to all our warlike toils?

It is universally acknowledged, that the enlarged prospects of happiness, opened by the confirmation of our independence and sovereignty, almost exceeds the power of description. And shall not the brave men, who have contributed so essentially to these inestimable acquisitions, retiring victorious from the field of war to the field of agriculture, participate in all the blessings, which have been obtained? In such a republic, who will exclude them from the rights of citizens, and the fruits of their labors? In such a country, so happily circumstanced, the pursuits of commerce and the cultivation of the soil will unfold to industry the certain road to competence. To those hardy soldiers, who are actuated by the spirit of adventure, the fisheries will afford ample and profitable employment; and the extensive and fertile regions of the West will yield a most happy asylum to those, who, fond of domestic enjoyment, are seeking for personal independence. Nor

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is it possible to conceive, that any one of the United States will prefer a national bankruptcy, and a dissolution of the Union, to a compliance with the requisition of Congress, and the payment of its just debts; so that the officers and soldiers may expect considerable assistance, in recommencing their civil occupations, from the public, which must and will most inevitably be paid.

In order to effect this desirable purpose, and to remove the prejudices, which may have taken possession of the minds of any of the good people of the States, it is earnestly recommended to all the troops, that, with strong attachments of the Union, they should carry with them into civil society the most conciliating dispositions, and that they should prove themselves not less virtuous and useful as citizens, than they have been persevering and victorious as soldiers. What though there should be some envious individuals, who are unwilling to pay the debt the public has contracted, or to yield the tribute due to merit; yet let such unworthy treatment produce no invective, or any instance of intemperate conduct. Let it be remembered, that the unbiassed voice of the free citizens of the United States has promised the just reward and given the merited applause. Let it be known and remembered, that the reputation of the federal armies is established beyond the reach of malevolence; and let a consciousness of their achievements and fame still incite the men, who composed them, to honorable actions; under the persuasion that the private virtues of economy, prudence, and industry, will not be less amiable in civil life, than more splendid qualities of valor, perseverance, and enterprise were in the field. Every one may rest assured, that much, very much, of the future happiness of the officers and men, will depend upon the wise and manly conduct, which shall be adopted by them when they are mingled

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with the great body of the community. And, although the General has so frequently given it as his opinion in the most public and explicit manner, that, unless the principles of the Federal Government were properly supported, and the powers of the Union increased, the honor, dignity, and justice of the nation would be lost forever; yet he cannot help repeating, on this occasion, so interesting a sentiment, and leaving it as his last injunction to every officer and soldier, who may view the subject in the same serious point of light, to add his best endeavors to those of his worthy fellow citizens towards effecting these great and valuable purposes, on which our very existence as a nation so materially depends.

The Commander-in-chief conceives little is now wanting, to enable the soldier, to change the military character into that of the citizen, but that steady and decent tenor of behavior, which has generally distinguished, not only the army under his immediate command, but the different detachments and separate armies, through the course of the war. From their good sense and prudence he anticipates the happiest consequences; and, while he congratulates them on the glorious occasion, which renders their services in the field no longer necessary, he wishes to express the strong obligations he feels himself under for the assistance he has received from every class and in every instance. He presents his thanks in the most serious and affectionate manner to the general officers, as well for their counsel, on many interesting occasions, as for their ardor in promoting the success of the plans he had adopted; to the commandants of regiments and corps, and to the other officers, for their great zeal and attention in carrying his orders promptly into execution; to the staff, for their alacrity and exactness in performing the duties of their several departments; and to the non-commissioned officers

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and private soldiers, for their extraordinary patience and suffering, as well as their invincible fortitude in action. To the various branches of the army, the General takes this last and solemn opportunity of professing his inviolable attachment and friendship. He wishes more than bare professions were in his power; that he were really able to be useful to them all in future life. He flatters himself, however, they will do him the justice to believe, that whatever could with propriety be attempted by him has been done.

And being now to conclude these his last public orders, to take his ultimate leave in a short time of the military character, and to bid a final adieu to the armies he has so long had the honor to command, he can only again offer in their behalf his recommendations to their grateful country, and his prayers to the God of armies. May ample justice be done them here, and may the choicest of Heaven's favors, both here and hereafter, attend those, who, under the Divine auspices, have secured innumerable blessings for others. With these wishes and this benediction, the Commander-in-chief is about to retire from service. The curtain of separation will soon be drawn, and the military scene to him will be closed for ever.

On Engaging Mechanics

To Tench Tilghman

MOUNT VERNON, 24 March, 1784.

Dear Sir: I am informed that a ship with Palatines is gone up to Baltimore, among whom are a number of tradesmen. I am a good deal in want of a house joiner and brick-layer who really understand their profession,

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and you would do me a favor by purchasing one of each for me, if to be had, I would not confine you to Palatines; if they are good workmen, they may be from Asia, Africa or Europe; they may be Mahometans, Jews or Christians of any sect, or they may be Atheists. I would, however, prefer middle aged to young men, and those who have good countenances, and good characters on ship board, to others who have neither of these to recommend them; altho' after all, I well know, the proof of the pudding must be in the eating. I do not limit you to a price, but will pay the purchase money on demand.

A Letter of Friendship and Compliment

To the Marchioness de Lafayette

MOUNT VERNON, 4 April, 1784.

Madam: It is now more than ever I want words to express the sensibility and gratitude, with which the honor of your felicitation of the 26th of December has inspired me. If my expression was equal to the feelings of my heart, the homage I am about to render you would appear in a more favorable point of view, than my most sanguine expectations will encourage me to hope for. I am more inclined, therefore, to rely upon the continuance of your indulgent sentiments towards me, and that innate goodness for which you are remarkable, than upon any merit I possess, or any assurances I could give of my sense of the obligation I am under for the honor you have conferred upon me by your correspondence.

Great as your claim is, as a French or American woman, or as the wife of my amiable friend, to my affectionate regards, you have others to which the palm must be yielded.

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The charms of your person, and the beauties of your mind, have a more powerful operation. These, Madam, have endeared you to me, and every thing, which partakes of your nature, will have a claim to my affections. George and Virginia, the offsprings of your love, whose names do honor to my country and to myself, have a double claim, and will be the object of my vows.

From the clangor of arms and the bustle of a camp, freed from the cares of public employment and the responsibility of office, I am now enjoying domestic ease under the shadow of my own vine and my own fig tree; and in a small villa, with the implements of husbandry and lambkins around me, I expect to glide gently down the stream of life, till I am entombed in the dreary mansion of my fathers.

Mrs. Washington is highly honored by your participations, and feels very sensibly the force of your polite invitation to Paris; but she is too far advanced in life, and is too much immersed in the care of her little progeny, to cross the Atlantic. This, my dear Marchioness (indulge me with this freedom), is not the case with you. You have youth (and, if you should not incline to bring your children, can leave them with all advantages to education), and must have a curiosity to see the country, young, rude, and uncultivated as it is, for the liberties of which your husband has fought, bled, and acquired much glory, where every body admires, every body loves him. Come, then, let me entreat it, and call my cottage your home; for your own doors do not open to you with more readiness than mine would. You will see the plain manner in which we live, and meet the rustic civility; and you shall taste the simplicity of rural life. It will diversify the scene, and may give you a higher relish for the gayeties of the court, when you return to Versailles. In these wishes, and in

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most respectful compliments, Mrs. Washington joins me. With sentiments of strong attachment, and very great regard, I have the honor to be, Madam, &c.

A Newsletter

To Major-General Knox

MOUNT VERNON, 5 January, 1785.

My Dear Sir: About the beginning of last month I wrote you a pretty long letter, and soon after, received your favor of the 23d. of November. It is not the letters from my friends which give me trouble or add ought to my perplexity. I receive them with pleasure, and pay as much attention to them as my avocations will admit.

It is references of old matters with which I have nothing to do—applications, which oftentimes cannot be complied with; enquiries, which would employ the pen of a historian to satisfy; letters of compliment, as unmeaning perhaps as they are troublesome, but which must be attended to; and the commonplace business, which employs my pen and my time;—often disagreeably.

Indeed, these with company, deprive me of exercise, and unless I can obtain relief, may be productive of disagreeable consequences. I already begin to feel the effect.—Heavy, and painful oppression of the head, and other disagreeable sensations, often trouble me.—I am determined therefore to employ some person who shall ease me of the drudgery of this business.—At *any rate*, if the whole of it is thereby suspended, I am resolved to use exercise. My private concerns also, require infinitely more attention than I have given, or can give, under present circumstances. They can no longer be neglected without involving my

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ruin. This, my dear Sir, is a friendly communication—I give it in testimony of my unreservedness with you, and not for the purpose of discouraging your letters; for be assured that, to correspond with those I love is among my highest gratifications, and I persuade myself you will not doubt my sincerity when I assure you I place you among the foremost of this class. Letters of friendship require no study, the communications are easy, and allowances are expected, and made. This is not the case with those which require re-searches, consideration, recollection, and the de—l knows what to prevent error, and to answer the ends for which they are written.

In my last I informed you that I was endeavoring to stimulate my Countrymen to the extension of the inland Navigation of our Rivers; and to the opening of the best and easiest communication for Land transportation between them and the Western Waters. I am just returned from Annapolis to which place I was requested to go by our Assembly (with my bosom friend Genl. G—tes, who being at Richmond contrived to edge himself into the commission) for the purpose of arranging matters, and forming a Law which should be similar in both States, so far as it respected the river Potomack, which separates them. I met the most perfect accordance in that legislature; and the matter is now reported to ours, for its concurrence.

On a Gift from the Virginia Legislature

To Benjamin Harrison

MOUNT VERNON, 22 January, 1785.

My Dear Sir: It is not easy for me to decide by which my mind was most affected upon the receipt of your letter

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of the 6th instant, surprise or gratitude. Both were greater than I have words to express. The attention and good wishes, which the Assembly have evidenced by their act for vesting in me one hundred and fifty shares of the navigation of each of the rivers Potomac and James, are more than mere compliment. There is an unequivocal and substantial meaning annexed. But believe me, Sir, notwithstanding these, no circumstance has happened to me since I left the walks of public life, which has so much embarrassed me.

On the one hand, I consider this act, as I have already observed, as a noble and unequivocal proof of the good opinion, the affection, and disposition of my country to serve me; and I should be hurt, if, by declining the acceptance of it, my refusal should be construed into disrespect or the smallest slight upon the generous intention of the country or it should be thought that an ostentatious display of disinterestedness or public virtue was the source of refusal. On the other hand, it is really my wish to have my mind, and my actions, which are the result of contemplation, as free and independent as the air; that I may be more at liberty (in things which my opportunities and experience have brought me to the knowledge of) to express my sentiments, and if necessary, to suggest what may occur to me under the fullest conviction, that, although my judgment may be arraigned, there be no suspicion that sinister motives had the smallest influence in the suggestion. Not content, then, with the bare consciousness of my having, in all this navigation business, acted upon the clearest conviction of the political importance of the measure, I would wish that every individual, who may hear that it was a favorite plan of mine, may know also that I had no other motive for promoting it, than the advantage I conceived it would be productive

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of to the Union, and to this State in particular, by cementing the eastern and western territory together, at the same time that it will give vigor and increase to our commerce, and be a convenience to our citizens.

How would this matter be viewed, then, by the eye of the world, and what would be the opinion of it, when it comes to be related, that George Washington exerted himself to effect this work—and George W— has received twenty thousand dollars and five thousand pounds sterling of the public money as an interest therein? Would not this in the estimation of it (if I am entitled to any merit for the part I have acted, and without it there is no foundation for the act,) deprive me of the principal thing, which is laudable in my conduct? Would it not in some respects be considered in the same light as a pension? And would not the apprehension of this make me more reluctantly offer my sentiments in future? In a word, under whatever pretence, and however customary these gratuitous gifts are made in other countries, should I not thenceforward be considered as a dependent? One moment's thought of which would give me more pain, than I should receive pleasure from the product of all the tolls, were every farthing of them vested in me; although I consider it as one of the most certain and increasing estates in the country.

I have written to you with an openness becoming our friendship. I could have said more on the subject; but I have already said enough to let you into the state of my mind. I wish to know whether the ideas I entertain occurred to, and were expressed by, any member in or out of the House. Upon the whole you may be assured, my dear Sir, that my mind is not a little agitated. I want the best information and advice to settle it. I have no inclination, as I have already observed, to avail myself of

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the generosity of the country; nor do I wish to appear ostentatiously disinterested (for more than probable my refusal would be ascribed to this motive), or that the country should harbor an idea, that I am disposed to set little value on her favors, the manner of granting which is as flattering as the grant is important. My present difficulties, however, shall be no impediment to the progress of the undertaking. I will receive the full and frank opinion of my friends with thankfulness. I shall have time enough between the sitting of the next Assembly to consider the tendency of the act, and in this, as in all other matters, will endeavor to decide for the best.

In the Power of the Painter

To Francis Hopkinson

MOUNT VERNON, 16 May, 1785.

Dear Sir: *In for a penny, in for a pound*, is an old adage. I am so hackneyed to the touches of the painter's pencil, that I am *now* altogether at their beck; and sit, "like Patience on a monument," whilst they are delineating the lines of my face. It is a proof, among many others, of what habit and custom can accomplish. At first I was as impatient at the request, and as restive under the operation, as a colt is of the saddle. The next time I submitted very reluctantly, but with less flouncing. Now, no dray-horse moves more readily to his thill than I to the painter's chair. It may easily be conceived, therefore, that I yielded a ready obedience to your request and to the views of Mr. Pine.

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On Marriage

To Burnell Bassett

MOUNT VERNON, 23rd May, 1785.

Dear Sir: My nephew, Geo. Aug. Washington, is just returned from his pergrination, apparently much amended in his health, but not quite free from the disorder in his side. I have understood that his addresses to Fanny were made with your consent, and I now learn that he is desirous, and she is willing, to fulfil the engagement they have entered into, and that they are applying to you for permission to do so.

It has ever been a maxim with me through life, neither to promote nor to prevent a matrimonial connection, unless there should be something indispensably requiring interference in the latter. I have always considered marriage as the most interesting event of one's life, the foundation of happiness or misery. To be instrumental therefore in bringing two people together, who are indifferent to each other, and may soon become objects of disgust; or to prevent a union which is prompted by the affections of the mind, is what I never could reconcile with reason, and therefore neither directly nor indirectly have I ever said a word to Fanny or George, upon the subject of their intended connection, but as their attachment to each other seems of early growth, warm and lasting, it bids fair for happiness. If therefore you have no objection, I think, the sooner it is consummated the better.

I have just now informed them both (the former through Mrs. Washington) that it is my wish they should live at Mt. Vernon.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On Endowment for a School

To the Trustees of the Alexandria Academy

17 December, 1785.

Gentlemen: It has long been my intention to invest, at my death, one thousand pounds current money of this State in the hands of trustees, the interest only of which to be applied in instituting a school in the town of Alexandria, for the purpose of educating orphan children, who have no other resource, or the children of such indigent parents, as are unable to give it; the objects to be considered of and determined by the trustees for time being, when applied to by the parents or friends of the children, who have pretensions to this provision. It is not in my power at this time to advance the above sum; but that a measure, that may be productive of good, may not be delayed, I will until my death, or until it shall be more convenient for my estate to advance the principal, pay the interest thereof, to wit, fifty pounds annually.

Under this state of the matter, I submit to your consideration the practicability and propriety of blending the two institutions together, so as to make one seminary under the direction of the president, visitors, or such other establishment as to you shall seem best calculated to promote the objects in view, and for preserving order, regularity, and good conduct in the academy. My intention, as I have before intimated, is, that the principal sum shall never be broken in upon; the interest only to be applied for the purposes above-mentioned. It was also my intention to apply the latter to the sole purpose of education, and of that kind of education which would be most ex-

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tensively useful to people of the lower class of citizens, namely, reading, writing, and arithmetic, so as to fit them for mechanical purposes.

The fund, if confined to this, would comprehend more subjects; but if you shall be of opinion, that the proposition I now offer can be made to comport with the institution of the school which is already established, and approve of an incorporation of them in the manner before mentioned, and thereafter, upon a full consideration of the matter, should conceive that this fund would be more advantageously applied towards clothing and schooling, than solely to the latter, I will acquiesce in it most cheerfully; and shall be ready, (as soon as the trustees are established upon a permanent footing,) by deed or other instrument of writing to vest the aforesaid sum of one thousand pounds in them and their successors for ever, with powers to direct and manage the same agreeably to these my declared intentions.

On Slavery

To Robert Morris

MOUNT VERNON, 12 April, 1786.

Dear Sir: I give you the trouble of this letter at the instance of Mr. Dalby of Alexandria, who is called to Philadelphia to attend what he conceives to be a vexatious lawsuit respecting a slave of his, which a society of Quakers in the city, (formed for such purposes,) have attempted to liberate. The merits of this case will no doubt appear upon trial. From Mr. Dalby's state of the matter, it should seem, that this society is not only acting repugnant to justice, so far as its conduct concerns strangers, but in my opinion extremely impolitically with

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respect to the State, the city in particular, and without being able, (but by acts of tyranny and oppression,) to accomplish its own ends. He says the conduct of this society is not sanctioned by law. Had the case been otherwise, whatever my opinion of the law might have been, my respect for the policy of the State would on this occasion have appeared in my silence; because against the penalties of promulgated laws one may guard, but there is no avoiding the snares of individuals, or of private societies. And if the practice of this society, of which Mr. Dalby speaks, is not discountenanced, none of those, whose *misfortune* it is to have slaves as attendants, will visit the city if they can possibly avoid it; because by so doing they hazard their property, or they must be at the expense (and this will not always succeed) of providing servants of another description for the trip.

I hope it will not be conceived from these observations, that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people, who are the subject of this letter, in slavery. I can only say, that there is not a man living, who wishes more sincerely than I do to see a plan adopted for the abolition of it; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished and that is by legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting. But when slaves, who are happy and contented with their present masters, are tampered with and seduced to leave them; when masters are taken unawares by these practices; when a conduct of this sort begets discontent on one side and resentment on the other; and when it happens to fall on a man, whose purse will not measure with that of the society, and he loses his property for want of means to defend it; it is oppression in such a case, and not humanity in any, because it introduces more evils than it can cure.

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The Spanish Jack—Abolition

To the Marquis de Lafayette

MOUNT VERNON, 10 May, 1786.

My dear Marquis: The Jack which I have already received from Spain, in appearance is fine; but his late royal master, tho' past his grand climacteric, cannot be less moved by female allurements than he is; or when prompted can proceed with more deliberation and majestic solemnity to the work of procreation.—The other Jack perished at sea.

The benevolence of your heart, my dear Marquis, is so conspicuous upon all occasions, that I never wonder at any fresh proofs of it; but your late purchase of an estate in the colony of Cayenne, with a view of emancipating the slaves on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity. Would to God a like spirit would diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country. But I despair of seeing it. Some petitions were presented to the Assembly at its last session, for the abolition of slavery, but they could scarcely obtain a reading. To set them afloat at once would, I really believe, be productive of much inconvenience and mischief; but by degrees it certainly might, and asuredly ought to be effected; and that too by legislative authority.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On a Tendency Toward Monarchy

To John Jay

MOUNT VERNON, 1 August, 1786.

Dear Sir: Your sentiments, that our affairs are drawing rapidly to a crisis, accord with my own. What the event will be, is also beyond the reach of my foresight. We have errors to correct. We have probably had too good an opinion of human nature in forming our confederation. Experience has taught us, that men will not adopt and carry into execution measures the best calculated for their own good, without the intervention of a coercive power. I do not conceive we can exist long as a nation without having lodged some where a power, which will pervade the whole Union in as energetic a manner as the authority of the State governments extends over the several States.

To be fearful of investing Congress, constituted as that body is, with ample authorities for national purposes, appears to me the very climax of popular absurdity and madness. Could Congress exert them for the detriment of the public, without injuring themselves in an equal or greater proportion? Are not their interests inseparably connected with those of their constituents? By the rotation of appointment, must they not mingle frequently with the mass of citizens? Is it not rather to be apprehended, if they were possessed of the power before described, that their individual members would be induced to use them; on many occasions, very timidly and inefficaciously for fear of losing their popularity and future election? We must take human nature as we find it. Perfection falls not to the share of mortals. Many are of opinion, that Congress have too frequently made use of the suppliant, humble

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tone of requisition in applications to the States, when they had a right to assert their imperial dignity and command obedience. Be that as it may, requisitions are a perfect nullity where thirteen sovereign, independent, disunited States are in the habit of discussing and refusing compliance with them at their option. Requisitions are actually little better than a jest and a by-word throughout the land. If you tell the legislatures they have violated the treaty of peace, and invaded the prerogatives of the confederacy, they will laugh in your face. What then is to be done? Things cannot go in the same train forever. It is much to be feared, as you observe, that the better kind of people, being disgusted with the circumstances, will have their minds prepared for any revolution whatever. We are apt to run from one extreme into another. To anticipate and prevent disastrous contingencies would be the part of wisdom and patriotism.

What astonishing changes a few years are capable of producing. I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchical form of government without horror. From thinking proceeds speaking; thence to acting is often but a single step. But how irrevocable and tremendous! What a triumph for our enemies to verify their predictions! What a triumph for the advocates of despotism to find, that we are incapable of governing ourselves, and that systems founded on the basis of equal liberty are merely ideal and fallacious! Would to God, that wise measures may be taken in time to avert the consequences we have but too much reason to apprehend.

Retired as I am from the world, I frankly acknowledge I cannot feel myself an unconcerned spectator. Yet, having happily assisted in bringing the ship into port, and having been fairly discharged, it is not my business to embark again on a sea of troubles. Nor could it be ex-

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pected, that my sentiments and opinions would have much weight on the minds of my countrymen. They have been neglected, though given as a last legacy in the most solemn manner. I had then perhaps some claim to public attention. I consider myself as having none at present.

Influence no Government

To Henry Lee, in Congress

MOUNT VERNON, 31 October, 1786.

My dear Sir: The picture which you have exhibited, and the accounts which are published of the commotions and temper of numerous bodies in the eastern States, are equally to be lamented and deprecated. They exhibit a melancholy proof of what our transatlantic foe has predicted; and of another thing perhaps, which is still more to be regretted, and is yet more unaccountable, that mankind, when left to themselves, are unfit for their own government. I am mortified beyond expression when I view the clouds, that have spread over the brightest morn that ever dawned upon any country. In a word, I am lost in amazement when I behold what intrigue, the interested views of desperate characters, ignorance, and jealousy of the minor part, are capable of effecting, as a scourge on the major part of our fellow citizens of the Union; for it is hardly to be supposed, that the great body of the people, though they will not act, can be so shortsighted or enveloped in darkness, as not to see rays of a distant sun through all this mist of intoxication and folly.

You talk, my good Sir, of employing influence to appease the present tumults in Massachusetts. I know not where

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that influence is to be found, or, if attainable, that it would be a proper remedy for the disorders. *Influence* is no *government*. Let us have one by which our lives, liberties, and properties will be secured, or let us know the worst at once. Under these impressions, my humble opinion is, that there is a call for decision. Know precisely what the insurgents aim at. If they have *real* grievances, redress them if possible; or acknowledge the justice of them, and your inability to do it in the present moment. If they have not, employ the force of government against them at once. If this is inadequate, *all* will be convinced, that the superstructure is bad, or wants support. To be more exposed in the eyes of the world, and more contemptible than we already are, is hardly possible. To delay one or the other of these, is to exasperate on the one hand, or to give confidence on the other, and will add their numbers; for, like snow-balls, such bodies increase by every movement, unless there is something in the way to obstruct and crumble them before the weight is too great and irresistible.

These are my sentiments. Precedents are dangerous things. Let the reins of government then be braced and held with a steady hand, and every violation of the constitution be reprehended. If defective, let it be amended, but not suffered to be trampled upon whilst it has an existence.

On Defects of the Confederation

To John Jay

MOUNT VERNON, 10 March, 1787.

Dear Sir: How far the revision of the federal system, and giving more adequate powers to Congress may be pro-

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ductive of an efficient government, I will not under my present view of the matter, presume to decide.—That many inconveniences result from the present form, none can deny. Those enumerated in your letter are so obvious and sensibly felt that no logic can controvert, nor is it likely that any change of conduct will remove them, and that attempts to alter or amend it will be like the propings of a house which is ready to fall, and which no shoars can support (as many seem to think) may also be true. But, is the public mind matured for such an important change as the one you have suggested? What would be the consequences of a premature attempt? My opinion is, that this Country must yet feel and see more, before it can be accomplished.

A thirst for power, and the bantling, I had liked to have said monster for sovereignty, which have taken such fast hold of the States individually, will when joined by the many whose personal consequence in the control of State politics will in a manner be annihilated, form a strong phalanx against it; and when to these the few who can hold posts of honor or profit in the national government, are compared with the many who will see but little prospect of being noticed, and the discontent of others who may look for appointments, the opposition will be altogether irresistible till the mass, as well as the more discerning part of the Community shall see the necessity. Among men of reflection, few will be found I believe who are not beginning to think that our system is more perfect in theory than in practice; and that notwithstanding the boasted virtue of America it is more than probable we shall exhibit the last melancholy proof, that mankind are not competent to their own government without the means of coercion in the sovereign.

Yet I would fain try what the wisdom of the proposed

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convention will suggest: and what can be effected by their councils. It may be the last peaceable mode of essaying the practicability of the present form, without a greater lapse of time than the exigency of our affairs will allow. In strict propriety a convention so holden may not be legal. Congress, however, may give it a coloring by recommendation, which would fit it more to the taste without proceeding to a definition of the powers. This, however constitutionally it might be done, would not, in my opinion, be expedient: for delicacy on the one hand, and jealousy on the other, would produce a mere nihil.

My name is in the delegation to this Convention; but it was put there contrary to my desire, and remains contrary to my request. Several reasons at the time of this appointment and which yet exist, conspired to make an attendance inconvenient, perhaps improper, tho' a good deal urged to it. With sentiments of great regard and friendship, &c.

Power of Coercion Essential

To James Madison, in Congress

MOUNT VERNON, 31 March, 1787.

My dear Sir: I am fully of opinion that those, who lean to a monarchical government, have either not consulted the public mind, or that they live in a region, which (the levelling principles in which they were bred being entirely eradicated) is much more productive of monarchical ideas, than are to be found in the southern States, where, from the habitual distinctions which have always existed among the people, one would have expected the first generation and the most rapid growth of them. I am

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also clear, that, even admitting the utility, nay, necessity of the form, yet that the period is not arrived for adopting the change without shaking the peace of this country to its foundation. That a thorough reform of the present system is indispensable, none, who have capacities to judge, will deny; and with hand [and heart] I hope the business will be essayed in a full convention. After which, if more powers and more decision is not found in the existing form, if it still wants energy and that secrecy and despatch (either from the non-attendance or the local views of its members), which is characteristic of good government, and if it shall be found (the contrary of which, however, I have always been more afraid of than of the abuse of them), that Congress will, upon all proper occasions, exert the powers which are given, with a firm and steady hand, instead of frittering them back to the States, where the members, in place of viewing themselves in their national character, are too apt to be looking,—I say, after this essay is made, if the system proves inefficient, conviction of the necessity of a change will be disseminated among all classes of the people. Then, and not till then, in my opinion, can it be attempted without involving all the evils of civil discord.

I confess, however, that my opinion of public virtue is so far changed, that I have my doubts whether any system, without the means of coercion in the sovereign, will enforce due obedience to the ordinances of a general government; without which every thing else fails. Laws or ordinances unobserved, or partially attended to, had better never have been made; because the first is a mere nihil, and the second is productive of much jealousy and discontent. But what kind of coercion, you may ask. This indeed will require thought, though the non-compliance of the States with the late requisition is an evidence of the necessity. It is

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somewhat singular that a State (New York), which used to be foremost in all federal measures, should now turn her face against them in almost every instance.

On the Constitution

To Colonel David Humphreys

MOUNT VERNON, 10 October, 1787.

My dear Humphreys: The Constitution that is submitted, is not free from imperfections, but there are as few radical defects in it as could will be expected, considering the heterogenous mass of which the Convention was composed and the diversity of interests that are to be attended to. As a Constitutional door is opened for future amendments and alterations, I think it would be wise in the People to accept what is offered to them and I wish it may be by as great a majority of them as it was by that of the Convention; but this is hardly to be expected because the importance and sinister views of too many characters, will be affected by the change.—Much will depend however upon literary abilities, and the recommendation of it by good pens should be *openly*, I mean, publicly afforded in the Gazettes.—Go matters however as they may, I shall have the consolation to reflect that no objects but the public good—and that peace and harmony which I wished to see prevail in the Convention, obtruded even for a moment in my bosom during the whole Session long as it was.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

A Defence of the Constitution

To Bushrod Washington

MOUNT VERNON, 10 November, 1787.

Dear Bushrod: A candid solution of a single question, to which the plainest understanding is competent, does, in my opinion, decide the dispute; namely, Is it best for the States to unite or not to unite? If there are men, who prefer the latter, then unquestionably the constitution which is offered must, in their estimation, be wrong from the words, "*We the People*," to the signature, inclusively; but those who think differently, and yet object to parts of it, would do well to consider, that it does not lie with any *one* State, or the *minority* of the States, to super-struct a constitution for the whole. The separate interests, as far as it is practicable, must be consolidated; and local views must be attended to, as far as the nature of the case will admit. Hence it is, that every State has some objection to the present form, and these objections are directed to different points. That which is most pleasing to one is obnoxious to another, and so *vice versa*. If then the union of the whole is a desirable object, the component parts must yield a little in order to accomplish it. Without the latter, the former is unattainable; for again I repeat it, that not a single State, nor the minority of the States, can force a constitution on the majority. But, admitting the power, it will surely be granted, that it cannot be done without involving scenes of civil commotion, of a very serious nature.

Let the opponents of the proposed constitution in this State be asked, and it is a question they certainly ought to have asked themselves, what line of conduct they would

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advise to adopt, if nine other States, of which I think there is little doubt, should accede to the constitution. Would they recommend, that it should stand single? Will they connect it with Rhode Island? Or even with two others checkerwise, and remain with them, as outcasts from the society, to shift for themselves? Or will they return to their dependence on Great Britain? Or, lastly, have the mortification to come in when they will be allowed no credit for doing so?

The warmest friends and the best supports the constitution has, do not contend that it is free from imperfections; but they found them unavoidable, and are sensible, if evil is likely to arise therefrom, the remedy must come hereafter; for in the present moment it is not to be obtained; and, as there is a constitutional door open for it, I think the people (for it is with them to judge), can, as they will have the advantage of experience on their side, decide with as much propriety on the alterations and amendments which are necessary, as ourselves. I do not think we are more inspired, have more wisdom, or possess more virtue, than those who will come after us.

The power under the constitution will always be in the people. It is intrusted for certain defined purposes, and for a certain limited period, to representatives of their own choosing; and, whenever it is executed contrary to their interest, or not agreeable to their wishes, their servants can and undoubtedly will be recalled. It is agreed on all hands, that no government can be well administered without powers; yet, the instant these are delegated, although those, who are intrusted with the administration, are no more than the creatures of the people, act as it were but for a day, and are amenable for every false step they take, they are, from the moment they receive it, set down as tyrants; their natures, they would conceive from this, im-

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mediately changed, and that they can have no other disposition but to oppress. Of these things, in a government constituted and guarded as *ours* is, I have no idea; and do firmly believe, that, whilst many *ostensible* reasons are assigned to prevent the adoption of it, the real ones are concealed behind the curtains, because they are not of a nature to appear in open day. I believe further, supposing them pure, that as great evils result from too great jealousy as from the want of it. We need look, I think, no further for proof of this, than to the constitution of some, if not all, of these States. No man is a warmer advocate for proper restraints and wholesome checks in every department of government, than I am; but I have never yet been able to discover the propriety of placing it absolutely out of the power of men to render essential services, because a possibility remains of their doing ill.

Washington's Political Theories

To the Marquis de Lafayette

MOUNT VERNON, 7 February, 1788.

My dear Marquis: You appear to be, as might be expected from a real friend to this country, anxiously concerned about its present political situation. So far as I am able, I shall be happy in gratifying that friendly solicitude. As to my sentiments with respect to the merits of the new constitution, I will disclose them without reserve, (although by passing through the post-office they should become known to all the world,) for in truth I have nothing to conceal on that subject. It appears to me, then, little short of a miracle, that the delegates from so many different States (which States you know are also different

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from each other), in their manners, circumstances, and prejudices, should unite in forming a system of national government, so little liable to well-founded objections. Nor am I yet such an enthusiastic, partial, or indiscriminating admirer of it, as not to perceive it is tinged with some real (though not radical) defects. The limits of a letter would not suffer me to go fully into an examination of them; nor would the discussion be entertaining or profitable. I therefore forbear to touch upon it. With regard to the two great points, (the pivots upon which the whole machine must move,) my creed is simply,

1st. That the general government is not invested with more powers, than are indispensably necessary to perform the functions of a good government; and consequently, that no objection ought to be made against the quantity of power delegated to it.

2ly. That these powers, (as the appointment of all rulers will for ever arise from, and at short, stated intervals recur to, the free suffrage of the people,) are so distributed among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, into which the general government is arranged, that it can never be in danger of degenerating into a monarchy, an oligarchy, an aristocracy, or any other despotic or oppressive form, so long as there shall remain any virtue in the body of the people.

I shall not be understood, my dear Marquis, to speak of consequences, which may be produced in the revolution of ages, by corruption of morals, profligacy of manners, and listlessness for the preservation of the natural and unalienable rights of mankind, nor of the successful usurpations, that may be established at such an unpropitious juncture upon the ruins of liberty, however providently guarded and secured; as these are contingencies against which no human prudence can effectually provide. It will at least

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be a recommendation to the proposed constitution, that it is provided with more checks and barriers against the introduction of tyranny, and those of a nature less liable to be surmounted, than any government hitherto instituted among mortals hath possessed. We are not to expect perfection in this world; but mankind, in modern times, have apparently made some progress in the science of government. Shall that, which is now offered to the people of America, be found on experiment less perfect than it can be made, a constitutional door is left open for its amelioration.

Some respectable characters have wished, that the States, after having pointed out whatever alterations and amendments may be judged necessary, would appoint another federal convention to modify it upon those documents. For myself, I have wondered, that sensible men should not see the impracticability of this scheme. The members would go fortified with such instructions, that nothing but discordant ideas could prevail. Had I but slightly suspected, at the time when the late convention was in session, that another convention would not be likely to agree upon a better form of government, I should now be confirmed in the fixed belief that they would not be able to agree upon any system whatever; so many, I may add, such contradictory and in my opinion unfounded objections have been urged against the system in contemplation, many of which would operate equally against every efficient government that might be proposed. I will only add, as a further opinion founded on the maturest deliberation, that there is no alternative, no hope of alteration, no intermediate resting-place, between the adoption of this, and a recurrence to an unqualified state of anarchy, with all its deplorable consequences.

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On the Pleasures of Agriculture

To Alexander Spotswood

MOUNT VERNON, 13 February, 1788.

Dear Sir: I think with you, that the life of a husbandman of all others is the most delectable. It is honorable, it is amusing, and, with judicious management, it is profitable. To see plants rise from the earth and flourish by the superior skill and bounty of the laborer fills a contemplative mind with ideas which are more easy to be conceived than expressed.

I am glad to find, that your first essay to raise Indian corn in drills has succeeded so much to your satisfaction; but I am inclined to think, unless restoratives were more abundant than they are to be found on common farms, that six feet by two will be too oppressive to your land. Experience has proved, that every soil will sink under the growth of this plant; whether from the luxuriancy and exhausting quality of it, or the manner of tillage, or from both, is not *very* certain; because, instead of two thousand four hundred and twenty plants, which stand on an acre at six feet square with two stalks in a hill, (as is usual in land of middling quality,) you have three thousand six hundred and thirty at six feet by two, single stalks. How far the exposing of land to the rays of the sun in summer is injurious, is a question yet more difficult to solve than the other. My own opinion of the matter is that it does; but this controverts the practice of summer fallows, which, (especially in heavy land,) some of the best practical farmers in England contend for as indispensably necessary, notwithstanding the doctrine of Mr. Young and many others, who are opposed to them.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

A Letter of Congratulation

To the Marquis de Chastellux

MOUNT VERNON, 25 April, 1788.

My dear Marquis: In reading your very friendly and acceptable letter, of 21st Decr., 1787, which came to hand by the last mail, I was, as you may well suppose, not less delighted than surprised to meet the plain American words, "my wife." A wife! Well, my dear Marquis, I can hardly refrain from smiling to find you are caught at last. I saw, by the eulogium you often made on the happiness of domestic life in America, that you had swallowed the bait, and that you would as surely be taken, one day or another, as that you were a philosopher and a soldier. So your day has at length come. I am glad of it, with all my heart and soul. It is quite good enough for you. Now you are well served for coming to fight in favor of the American rebels, all the way across the Atlantic Ocean, by catching that terrible contagion—domestic felicity—which time, like the small pox or the plague, a man can have only once in his life: because it commonly lasts him (at least with us in America—I don't know how you manage these matters in France) for his whole life time. And yet after all the maledictions you so richly merit on the subject, the worst wish which I can find in my heart to make against Madame de Chastellux and yourself is, that you may neither of you ever get the better of this same—domestic felicity during the entire course of your mortal existence.

If so wonderful an event should have occasioned me, my dear Marquis, to have written in a strange style—you will understand me as clearly as if I had said (what in plain English, is the simple truth) do me the justice to believe

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that I take a heartfelt interest in whatever concerns your happiness. And in this view I sincerely congratulate you on your auspicious matrimonial connection. I am happy to find that Madame de Chastellux is so intimately connected with the Dutchess of Orleans, as I have always understood that this noble lady was an illustrious pattern of connubial love, as well as an excellent model of virtue in general.

While you have been making love, under the banner of Hymen, the great Personages in the North have been making war, under the inspiration or rather under the infatuation of Mars. Now, for my part, I humbly conceive, you have had much the best and wisest of the bargain. For certainly it is more consonant to all the principles of reason and religion (natural and revealed) to replenish the earth with inhabitants, rather than to depopulate it by killing those already in existence, besides it is time for the age of knight-errantry and mad-heroism to be at an end. You young military men, who want to reap the harvest of laurels, don't care (I suppose) how many seeds of war are sown; but for the sake of humanity it is devoutly to be wished, that the manly employment of agriculture, and the humanizing benefits of commerce, would supersede the waste of war and the rage of conquest; and the swords might be turned into ploughshares, the spears into pruning-hooks, and as the Scripture expresses it, "the nations learn war no more."

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On Objections to the Constitution

To the Marquis de Lafayette

MOUNT VERNON, 28 April, 1788.

On the general merits of this proposed constitution, I wrote to you some time ago my sentiments pretty freely. That letter had not been received by you, when you addressed to me the last of yours, which has come to my hands. I had never supposed that perfection could be the result of accommodation and mutual concession. The opinion of Mr. Jefferson and yourself is certainly a wise one, that the constitution ought by all means to be accepted by nine States before any attempt should be made to procure amendments; for, if that acceptance shall not previously take place, men's minds will be so much agitated and soured, that the danger will be greater than ever of our becoming a disunited people. Whereas, on the other hand, with prudence in temper and a spirit of moderation, every essential alteration may in the process of time be expected.

You will doubtless have seen, that it was owing to this conciliatory and patriotic principle, that the convention of Massachusetts adopted the constitution *in toto*, but recommended a number of specific alterations, and quieting explanations as an early, serious, and unremitting subject of attention. Now, although it is not to be expected, that every individual in society will or can be brought to agree upon what is exactly the best form of government, yet there are many things in the constitution, which only need to be explained, in order to prove equally satisfactory to all parties. For example, there was not a member of the convention, I believe, who had the least objection to what

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is contended for by the advocates for a *Bill of Rights* and *Trial by Jury*. The first, where the people evidently retained every thing, which they did not in the express terms give up, was considered nugatory, as you will find to have been more fully explained by Mr. Wilson and others; and, as to the second, it was only the difficulty of establishing a mode, which should not interfere with the fixed modes of any of the States, that induced the convention to leave it as a matter of future adjustment.

There are other points in which opinions would be more likely to vary. As for instance, on the ineligibility of the same person for president, after he should have served a certain course of years. Guarded so effectually as the proposed constitution is, in respect to the prevention of bribery and undue influence in the choice of president, I confess I differ widely myself from Mr. Jefferson and you, as to the necessity or expediency of rotation in that appointment. The matter was fairly discussed in the convention, and to my full conviction, though I cannot have time or room to sum up the argument in this letter. There cannot in my judgment be the least danger, that the president will by any practicable intrigue ever be able to continue himself one moment in office, much less perpetuate himself in it, but in the last stage of corrupted morals and political depravity; and even then, there is as much danger that any other species of domination would prevail. Though, when a people shall have become incapable of governing themselves, and fit for a master, it is of little consequence from what quarter he comes. Under an extended view of this part of the subject, I can see no propriety in precluding ourselves from the services of any man, who on some great emergency shall be deemed universally most capable of serving the public.

In answer to the observations you make on the prob-

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ability of my election to the presidency, knowing me as you do, I need only say, that it has no enticing charms and no fascinating allurements for me. However, it might not be decent for me to say I would refuse to accept, or even to speak much about an appointment, which may never take place; for, in so doing, one might possibly incur the application of the moral resulting from that fable, in which the fox is represented as inveighing against the sourness of the grapes, because he could not reach them. All that it will be necessary to add, my dear Marquis, in order to show my decided predilections is, that, (at my time of life and under my circumstances,) the increasing infirmities of nature and the growing love of retirement do not permit me to entertain a wish beyond that of living and dying an honest man on my own farm. Let those follow the pursuits of ambition and fame, who have a keener relish for them, or who may have more years in store for the enjoyment.

American Poetical Genius

To the Marquis de Lafayette

MOUNT VERNON, 28 May, 1788.

My dear Marquis: Notwithstanding you are acquainted with Mr. Barlow in person, and with his works by reputation, I thought I would just write you a line by him, in order to recommend him the more particularly to your civilities. Mr. Barlow is considered by those who are good Judges to be a genius of the first magnitude; and to be one of those Bards who hold the keys of the gate by which Patriots, Sages and Heroes are admitted to immortality. Such are your Antient Bards who are both the priest and door-keepers to the temple of fame. And these, my dear

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Marquis, are no vulgar functions. Men of real talents in Arms have commonly approved themselves patrons of the liberal arts and friends to the poets, of their own as well as former times. In some instances by acting reciprocally, heroes have made poets, and poets heroes. Alexander the Great is said to have been enraptured with the Poems of Homer, and to have lamented that he had not a rival muse to celebrate his actions. Julius Cæsar is well known to have been a man of a highly cultivated understanding and taste. Augustus was the professed and magnificent rewarder of poetical merit—nor did he lose the return of having his atcheivments immortalized in song. The Augustan Age is proverbial for intellectual refinement and elegance in composition; in it the harvest of laurels and bays was wonderfully mingled together. The age of your Louis the fourteenth, which produced a multitude of great Poets and great Captains, will never be forgotten; nor will that of Queen Ann in England, for the same cause, ever cease to reflect a lustre upon the kingdom. Although we are yet in our cradle, as a nation, I think the efforts of the human mind with us are sufficient to refute (by incontestable facts) the doctrines of those who have asserted that every thing degenerates in America. Perhaps we shall be found at this moment, not inferior to the rest of the world in the performances of our poets and painters; notwithstanding many of the incitements are wanting which operate powerfully among older nations. For it is generally understood, that excellence in those sister Arts has been the result of easy circumstances, public encouragements and an advanced stage of society. I observe that the Critics in England, who speak highly of the American poetical geniuses (and their praises may be the more relied upon as they seem to be reluctantly extorted,) are not pleased with the tribute of applause which is paid

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to your nation. It is a reason why they should be the more caressed by your nation. I hardly know how it is that I am drawn thus far in observations on a subject so foreign from those in which we are mostly engaged, farming and politics, unless because I had little news to tell you.

On Advantages of America to Immigrants

To Richard Henderson

MOUNT VERNON, 19 June, 1788.

Sir: In the first place it is a point conceded, that America, under an efficient government, will be the most favorable country of any in the world for persons of industry and frugality possessed of a moderate capital to inhabit. It is also believed, that it will not be less advantageous to the happiness of the lowest class of people, because of the equal distribution of property, the great plenty of unoccupied lands, and the facility of procuring the means of subsistence. The scheme of purchasing a good tract of freehold estate, and bringing out a number of able-bodied men, indented for a certain time, appears to be indisputably a rational one.

All the interior arrangements of transferring the property and commencing the establishment, you are as well acquainted with as I can possibly be. It might be considered as a point of more difficulty to decide upon the place, which should be most proper for a settlement. Although I believe that emigrants from other countries to this, who shall be well-disposed, and conduct themselves properly, would be treated with equal friendship and kindness in all parts of it; yet, in the old settled States, land is so much occupied and the value so much enhanced by

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the contiguous cultivation, that the price would, in general, be an objection. The land in [the] western country, or that on the Ohio, like all others, has its *advantages and disadvantages*. The neighborhood of the savages, and the difficulty of transportation, were the great objections. The danger of the first will soon cease by the strong establishments now taking place; the inconveniences of the second will be, in a great degree, remedied by opening the internal navigation. No colony in America was ever settled under such favorable auspices, as that which has just commenced at the Muskingum. Information, property and strength, will be its characteristics. I know many of the settlers personally, and that there never were men better calculated to promote the welfare of such a community.

On the Reluctance to Accept Presidency

To Alexander Hamilton

MOUNT VERNON, 3 October, 1788.

Dear Sir: Although I could not help observing, from several publications and letters, that my name had been sometimes spoken of, and that it was possible the *contingency* which is the subject of your letter might happen, yet I thought it best to maintain a guarded silence, and to lack the counsel of my best friends, (which I certainly hold in the highest estimation,) rather than to hazard an imputation unfriendly to the delicacy of my feelings. For, situated as I am, I could hardly bring the question into the slightest discussion, or ask an opinion even in the most confidential manner, without betraying, in my judgment, some impropriety of conduct, or without feeling an apprehension, that a premature display of anxiety might be

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construed into a vainglorious desire of pushing myself into notice as a candidate. Now, if I am not grossly deceived in myself, I should unfeignedly rejoice in case the electors, by giving their votes in favor of some other person, would save me from the dreaded dilemma of being forced to accept or refuse.

If that may not be, I am in the next place earnestly desirous of searching out the truth, and of knowing whether there does not exist a probability that the government would be just as happily and effectually carried into execution without my aid as with it. I am *truly* solicitous to obtain all the previous information, which the circumstances will afford, and to determine (when the determination can with propriety be no longer postponed) according to the principles of right reason and the dictates of a clear conscience, without too great a reference to the unforeseen consequences, which may affect my person or reputation. Until that period, I may fairly hold myself open to conviction, though I allow your sentiments to have weight in them; and I shall not pass by your arguments without giving them as dispassionate a consideration as I can possibly bestow upon them.

In taking a survey of the subject, in whatever point of light I have been able to place it, I will not suppress the acknowledgment, my dear Sir, that I have always felt a kind of gloom upon my mind, as often as I have been taught to expect I might, and perhaps must, ere long, be called to make a decision. You will, I am well assured, believe the assertion, (though I have little expectation it would gain credit from those who are less acquainted with me,) that, if I should receive the appointment, and if I should be prevailed upon to accept it, the acceptance would be attended with more diffidence and reluctance than I ever experienced before in my life. It would be, however,

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with a fixed and sole determination of lending whatever assistance might be in my power to promote the public weal, in hopes that at a convenient and early period my services might be dispensed with, and that I might be permitted once more to retire, to pass an unclouded evening after the stormy day of life, in the bosom of domestic tranquillity.

But why these anticipations? If the friends to the constitution conceive that my administering the government will be a means of its acceleration and strength, is it not probable that the adversaries of it may entertain the same ideas, and of course make it an object of opposition? That many of this description will become electors, I can have no doubt of, any more than their opposition will extend to any character, who, (from whatever cause,) would be likely to thwart their measures. It might be impolitic in them to make this declaration *previous* to the election; but I shall be out in my conjectures if they do not act conformably thereto, and from the seeming moderation, by which they appear to be actuated at present is neither more nor less than a finesse to lull and deceive. Their plan of opposition is systematized, and a regular intercourse, I have much reason to believe, between the leaders of it in the several States is formed to render it more effectual.

On Manufactures

To the Marquis de Lafayette

MOUNT VERNON, 29 January, 1789.

My dear Marquis: What has been considered at the moment as a disadvantage, will probably turn out for our good. While our commerce has been considerably curtailed,

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for want of that extensive credit formerly given in Europe, and for default of remittance, the useful arts have been almost imperceptibly pushed to a considerable degree of perfection.

Though I would not force the introduction of manufactures, by extravagant encouragements, and to the prejudice of agriculture, yet I conceive much might be done in that way by women, children, and others, without taking one really necessary hand from tilling the earth. Certain it is, great savings are already made in many articles of apparel, furniture, and consumption. Equally certain it is, that no diminution in agriculture has taken place, at the time when greater and more substantial improvements in manufactures were making, than were ever before known in America. In Pennsylvania they have attended particularly to the fabrication of cotton cloths, hats, and all articles in leather. In Massachusetts, they are establishing factories of duck, cordage, glass, and several other extensive and useful branches. The number of shoes made in one town, and nails in another, is incredible. In that State and Connecticut are also factories of superfine and other broadcloths. I have been writing to our friend General Knox this day to procure me homespun broadcloth of the Hartford fabric, to make a suit of clothes for myself. I hope it will not be a great while before it will be unfashionable for a gentleman to appear in any other dress. Indeed, we have already been too long subject to British prejudices. I use no porter or cheese in my family but such as is made in America. But those articles may now be purchased of an excellent quality.

While you are quarrelling among yourselves in Europe, while one King is running mad, and others acting as if they were already so, by cutting the throats of the subjects of their neighbors, I think you need not doubt, my

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dear Marquis, we shall continue in tranquillity here, and that population will be progressive so long as there shall continue to be so many easy means for obtaining a subsistence, and so ample a field for the exertion of talents and industry. All my family join in compliments to Madame De Lafayette and yourself. Adieu.

A Letter of Advice

To George Steptoe Washington

MOUNT VERNON, 23 March, 1789.

Dear George: As it is probable I shall soon be under the necessity of quitting this place, and entering once more into the bustle of publick life, in conformity to the voice of my Country and the earnest entreaties of my friends, however contrary it is to my own desires or inclinations; I think it incumbent on me as your Uncle and friend, to give you some advisory hints, which if properly attended to, will, I conceive, be found very useful to you in regulating your conduct and giving you respectability not only at present but through every period of life. You have now arrived to that age when you must quit the trifling amusements of a boy, and assume the more dignified manners of a man.

At this crisis your conduct will attract the notice of those who are about you; and as the first impressions are generally the most lasting; your doings now may mark the leading traits of your character through life. It is therefore, absolutely necessary, if you mean to make any figure upon the stage, that you should take the first steps right. What these steps are and what general line is to be pursued to lay the foundation of an honorable and

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happy progress, is the part of age and experience to point out. This I shall do, as far as in my power with the utmost cheerfulness; and, I trust, that your own good sense will shew you the necessity of following it. The first and great object with you at present is to acquire, by industry and application, such knowledge as your situation enables you to obtain, as will be useful to you in life. In doing this two other important objects will be gained besides the acquisition of knowledge—namely a habit of industry, and a disrelish of that profusion of money and dissipation of time which are ever attendant upon idleness. I do not mean by a close application to your studies that you should never enter into those amusements which are suited to your age and station. They may be made to go hand in hand with each other, and used in their proper seasons, will ever be found to be a mutual assistance to each other. But what amusements are to be taken, and when, is the great matter to be attended to—your own judgement, with the advice of your real friends who may have an opportunity of a personal intercourse with you can point out the particular manner in which you may *best* spend your moments of relaxation, much better than I can at a distance.—One thing, however, I would strongly impress upon you, viz: that when you have leisure, to go into company; that it should always be of the best kind that the place you are in will afford; by this means you will be constantly improving your manners and cultivating your mind while you are relaxing from your books; and good company will always be found much less expensive than bad. You cannot offer, as an excuse for not using it, that you cannot gain admission there, or that you have not a proper attention paid you in it, this is an apology made only, by those whose manners are disgusting, or whose character is exceptionable; neither of which, I hope will ever be said of

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you. I cannot enjoin too strongly upon you a due observance of economy and frugality: As you well know yourself, the present state of your property and finances will not admit of any unnecessary expense. The article of clothing is *now* one of the chief expenses, you will incur; and in this, I fear, you are not so economical as you should be. Decency and cleanliness will always be the first object in the dress of a judicious and sensible man. A conformity to the prevailing fashion in a certain degree is necessary—but it does not follow from thence that a man should always get a new coat, or other clothes, upon every trifling change in the mode, when, perhaps he has two or three very good ones by him. A person who is anxious to be a leader of the fashion, or one of the first to follow it, will certainly appear in the eyes of judicious men, to have nothing better than a frequent c[h]ange of dress to recommend him to notice. I would always wish you to appear sufficiently decent to entitle you to admission into any company, where you may be,—but I cannot too strongly enjoin it upon you—and your own knowledge must convince you of the truth of it—that you should be as little expensive in this respect as you properly can—You should always keep some clothes to wear to church, or on particular occasions, which should not be worn every day. This can be done without any additional expense; for whenever it is necessary to get new clothes, those which have been kept for particular occasions, will then come in as every day ones, unless they should be of a superior quality to the new. What I have said with respect to clothes will apply perhaps more pointedly to Lawrence than to you,—and as you are much older than he is, and more capable of judging of the propriety of what I have here observed, you must pay attention to him, in this respect, and see that he does not wear his clothes improperly or extravagantly. Much more might

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be said to you, as a young man, upon the necessity of paying due attention to the moral virtues,—but this may, perhaps, more properly be the subject of a future letter when you are about to enter into the world. If you comply with the advice herein given, to pay a diligent attention to your studies, and employ your time of relaxation in proper company, you will find but few opportunities and little inclination, while you continue at an Acadimy, to enter into those scenes of vice and dissipation which too often present themselves to youth in every place, and particularly in towns. If you are determined to neglect your books, and plunge into extravagance and dissipation nothing that I can now say would prevent it,—for you must be employed, and if it is not in pursuit of those things profitable, it must be in pursuit of those which are——.

On the Results of Intemperance

To Thomas Green

MOUNT VERNON, 31 March, 1789.

Thomas Green: I shall inform you in the most serious and positive terms that I have left strict orders with the Major my nephew, who is vested with full powers to transact all my business, that if he should find you unfaithful to your engagements, either from the love of liquor, from a disposition to be running about, or from proneness to idle when at your work—to discard you immediately, and to remove your family from their present abode. The sure means to avoid this evil is—first to refrain from drink which is the source of all evil—and the ruin of half the workmen in this Country—and next to avoid bad company, which is the bane of good morals, economy and industry—

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You have every inducement to do this—Reputation—the care and support of a growing family—and society which this family affords within your own doors, which may not be the case with some of the idle (to say nothing worse of them) characters who may lead you into temptation. Were you to look back, and had the means, either from recollection, or accounts, to ascertain the cost of the liquor you have expended it would astonish you—In the manner this expence is generally incurred, that is by getting a little now—a little then, the impropriety of it is not seen, in as much as it passes away without much thought. But view it in the aggregate you will be convinced at once, whether any man who depends upon the labor of his hands, not only for his own support, but that of an encreasing family, can afford such a proportion of his wages to that article. But the expence is not the worst consequence that attends it, for it naturally leads a man into the company of those who encourage dissipation and idleness, by which he is led by degrees to the perpetration of acts which may terminate in his Ruin. But supposing this not to happen, a disordered frame, and a body debilitated, renders him unfit (even if his mind was disposed to discharge the duties of his station with honor to himself or fidelity to his employer) from the execution of it. An aching head and trembling limbs, which are the inevitable effects of drinking, disincline the hands from work; hence begins sloth and that Listlessness, which end in idleness, but which are no reasons for withholding that labor for which money is paid.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

Feels like a Culprit

To Henry Knox

MOUNT VERNON, 1 April, 1789.

Dear Sir: I feel for those members of the new Congress, who hitherto have given an unavailing attendance at the theatre of action. For myself the delay may be compared to a reprieve; for in confidence I tell you, (with the *world* it would obtain little credit,) that my movements to the chair of government will be accompanied by feelings not unlike those of a culprit, who is going to the place of his execution; so unwilling am I, in the evening of a life nearly consumed in public cares, to quit a peaceful abode for an ocean of difficulties, without that competency of political skill, abilities, and inclination, which are necessary to manage the helm. I am sensible that I am embarking the voice of the people, and a good name of my own, on this voyage; but what returns will be made for them, Heaven alone can foretell. Integrity and firmness are all I can promise. These, be the voyage long or short, shall never forsake me, although I may be deserted by all men; for of the consolations, which are to be derived from these, under any circumstances, the world cannot deprive me.

First Inaugural Address

Inaugural Speech to Both Houses of Congress

30th April, 1789

Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives: Among the vicissitudes incident to life, no event

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could have filled me with greater anxieties, than that of which the notification was transmitted by your order, and received on the 14th day of the present month. On the one hand, I was summoned by my country, whose voice I can never hear but with veneration and love, from a retreat which I had chosen with the fondest predilection, and, in my flattering hopes, with an immutable decision, as the asylum of my declining years; a retreat which was rendered every day more necessary as well as more dear to me, by the addition of habit to inclination, and of frequent interruptions in my health to the gradual waste committed on it by time. On the other hand, the magnitude and difficulty of the trust, to which the voice of my country called me, being sufficient to awaken in the wisest and most experienced of her citizens a distrustful scrutiny into his qualifications, could not but overwhelm with despondence one, who, inheriting inferior endowments from nature, and unpractised in the duties of civil administration, ought to be peculiarly conscious of his own deficiencies. In this conflict of emotions, all I dare aver is, that it has been my faithful study to collect my duty from a just appreciation of every circumstance by which it might be affected. All I dare hope is, that, if in executing this task, I have been too much swayed by a grateful remembrance of former instances, or by an affectionate sensibility to this transcendent proof of the confidence of my fellow-citizens; and have hence too little consulted my incapacity as well as disinclination for the weighty and untried cares before me; my error will be palliated by the motives which misled me, and its consequences be judged by my country with some share of the partiality in which they originated.

Such being the impressions under which I have, in obedience to the public summons, repaired to the present station, it would be peculiarly improper to omit, in this

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first official act, my fervent supplications to that Almighty Being, who rules over the universe, who presides in the councils of nations, and whose providential aids can supply every human defect, that his benediction may consecrate to the liberties and happiness of the people of the United States a government instituted by themselves for these essential purposes, and may enable every instrument employed in its administration to execute with success the functions allotted to his charge. In tendering this homage to the great Author of every public and private good, I assure myself that it expresses your sentiments not less than my own; nor those of my fellow-citizens at large, less than either. No people can be bound to acknowledge and adore the invisible hand, which conducts the affairs of men, more than the people of the United States. Every step, by which they have advanced to the character of an independent nation, seems to have been distinguished by some token of providential agency. And, in the important revolution just accomplished in the system of their united government, the tranquil deliberations and voluntary consent of so many distinct communities, from which the event has resulted, cannot be compared with the means by which most governments have been established, without some return of pious gratitude along with an humble anticipation of the future blessings which the past seem to presage. These reflections, arising out of the present crisis, have forced themselves too strongly on my mind to be suppressed. You will join with me, I trust, in thinking that there are none, under the influence of which the proceedings of a new and free government can more auspiciously commence.

By the article establishing the executive department, it is made the duty of the President "to recommend to your consideration such measures, as he shall judge necessary

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and expedient." The circumstances, under which I now meet you, will acquit me from entering into that subject farther than to refer you to the great constitutional charter under which we are assembled; and which, in defining your powers, designates the objects to which your attention is to be given. It will be more consistent with those circumstances, and far more congenial with the feelings which actuate me, to substitute, in place of a recommendation of particular measures, the tribute that is due to the talents, the rectitude, and the patriotism, which adorn the characters selected to devise and adopt them. In these honorable qualifications I behold the surest pledges, that as, on one side, no local prejudices or attachments, no separate views of party animosities, will misdirect the comprehensive and equal eye, which ought to watch over this great assemblage of communities and interests; so, on another, that the foundations of our national policy will be laid in the pure and immutable principles of private morality, and the pre-eminence of a free government be exemplified by all the attributes, which can win the affections of its citizens, and command the respect of the world.

I dwell on this prospect with every satisfaction, which an ardent love for my country can inspire; since there is no truth more thoroughly established, than that there exists in the economy and course of nature an indissoluble union between virtue and happiness, between duty and advantage, between the genuine maxims of an honest and magnanimous policy, and the solid rewards of public prosperity and felicity; since we ought to be no less persuaded that the propitious smiles of Heaven can never be expected on a nation that disregards the eternal rules of order and right, which Heaven itself has ordained; and since the preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the republican model of government, are justly con-

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sidered as *deeply*, perhaps as *finally* staked, on the experiment intrusted to the hands of the American people.

On Candidates for Office

To Mary Wooster

NEW YORK, 21 May, 1789.

Madam: I have duly received your affecting letter, dated the 8th day of this month. Sympathizing with you as I do in the great misfortunes, which have befallen your family in consequence of the war, my feelings as an individual would forcibly prompt me to do every thing in my power to repair those misfortunes. But as a public man, acting only with a reference to the public good, I must be allowed to decide upon all points of my duty, without consulting my private inclinations and wishes. I must be permitted, with the best lights I can obtain, and upon a general view of characters and circumstances, to nominate such persons alone to offices, as in my judgment shall be the best qualified to discharge the functions of the departments to which they shall be appointed.

Hitherto I have given no decisive answers to the applications of my candidates whatsoever. Nor would it be proper for me, before offices shall be created, and before I can have a general knowledge of the competitors for them, to say any thing that might be construed as intended to encourage or discourage the hopes, which individuals may have formed of success. I only wish, so far as my agency in this business is concerned, that candidates for offices would save themselves the trouble and consequent expense of personal attendance. All that *I* require is the name and such testimonials with respect to abilities, in-

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tegrity, and fitness, as it may be in the power of the several applicants to produce. Beyond this, nothing with *me* is necessary, or will be of any avail to them in my decisions. In the mean time I beg you will be persuaded, Madam, that, let the result be whatsoever it may, I can have no interest to promote but that of the public; and that I remain in all personal considerations, with the highest respect, your most obedient servant.

On the Death of His Mother

To Mrs. Betty Lewis

NEW YORK, 13 September, 1789.

My dear Sister: Colonel Ball's letter gave me the first account of my mother's death. Since that I have received Mrs. Carter's letter, written at your request, and previous to both I was prepared for the event by some advices of her illness communicated to your son Robert.

Awful and affecting as the death of a parent is, there is consolation in knowing, that heaven has spared ours to an age beyond which few attain, and favored her with the full enjoyment of her mental faculties, and as much bodily strength as usually falls to the lot of four score. Under these considerations, and a hope that she is translated to a happier place, it is the duty of her relatives to yield due submission to the decrees of the Creator. When I was last at Fredericksburg, I took a final leave of my mother, never expecting to see her more.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

An Order for Table Ornaments

To Gouverneur Morris

NEW YORK, 13 October, 1789.

Dear Sir: Will you, my good Sir, permit me to ask the favor of you to provide and send to me by the first Ship, bound to this place, or Philadelphia, mirrors for a table, with neat and fashionable but not expensive ornaments for them—such as will do credit to your taste—The mirrors will of course be in pieces that they may be adapted to the company, (the size of it I mean) the aggregate length of them may be ten feet—the breadth two feet—The frames may be plated ware, or any thing else more fashionable but not more expensive. If I am defective recur to what you have seen on Mr. Morris's table for my ideas *generally*. Whether these things can be had on better terms and in a better style in Paris than in London I will not undertake to decide. I recollect however to have had plated ware from both places and those from the latter came cheapest,—but a single instance is no evidence of a general fact.

Of plated ware may be made I conceive handsome and useful Coolers for wine *at* and *after* dinner. Those I am in need of viz; *eight* double ones (for madeira and claret the wines usually drank at dinner) each of the apertures to be sufficient to contain a pint decanter, with an allowance in the depth of it for ice at bottom so as to raise the neck of the decanter above the cooler—between the apertures a handle is to be placed by which these double coolers may with convenience be removed from one part of the table to another. For the wine *after* dinner *four* quadruple coolers will be necessary, each aperture of which to be

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of the size of a *quart* decanter or quart bottle for four sorts of wine—These decanters or bottles to have ice at bottom, and to be elevated thereby as above—a central handle here also will be wanting—Should my description be defective, your imagination is fertile and on this I shall rely. One idea however I must impress you with and that is in whole or part to avoid extravagance. For extravagance would not comport with my own inclination, nor with the example which ought to be set. The reason why I prefer an aperture for every decanter or bottle to coolers that would contain two and four is that whether full or empty the bottles will always stand upright and never be at variance with each other.

Speech to Both Houses of Congress

January 8, 1790

Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives: In resuming your consultations for the general good, you cannot but derive encouragement from the reflection, that the measures of the last session have been as satisfactory to your constituents, as the novelty and difficulty of the work allowed you to hope. Still further to realize their expectations, and to secure the blessings, which a gracious Providence has placed within our reach, will, in the course of the present important session, call for the cool and deliberate exertion of your patriotism, firmness, and wisdom.

Among the many interesting objects, which will engage your attention, that of providing for the common defence will merit particular regard. To be prepared for war is one of the most effectual means of preserving peace.

A free people ought not only to be armed, but disci-

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plined; to which end a uniform and well-digested plan is requisite; and their safety and interest require, that they should promote such manufactories as tend to render them independent on others for essential, particularly for military, supplies.

The proper establishment of the troops, which may be deemed indispensable, will be entitled to mature consideration. In the arrangements which may be made respecting it, it will be of importance to conciliate the comfortable support of the officers and soldiers with due regard to economy.

The advancement of agriculture, commerce, and manufactures, by all proper means, will not, I trust, need recommendation. But I cannot forbear intimating to you the expediency of giving effectual encouragement, as well to the introduction of new and useful inventions from abroad, as to the exertions of skill and genius in producing them at home; and of facilitating the intercourse between the distant parts of our country by a due attention to the post-office and post-roads.

Nor am I less persuaded, that you will agree with me in opinion, that there is nothing which can better deserve your patronage than the promotion of science and literature. Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness. In one, in which the measures of government receive their impression so immediately from the sense of the community, as in ours, it is proportionably essential. To the security of a free constitution it contributes in various ways; by convincing those who are intrusted with the public administration, that every valuable end of government is best answered by the enlightened confidence of the people; and by teaching the people themselves to know, and to value their own rights; to discern and provide against invasions of them; to distinguish be-

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tween oppression and the necessary exercise of lawful authority, between burthens proceeding from a disregard to their convenience and those resulting from the inevitable exigencies of society; to discriminate the spirit of liberty from that of licentiousness, cherishing the first, avoiding the last, and uniting a speedy but temperate vigilance against encroachments, with an inviolable respect to the laws.

Whether this desirable object will be the best promoted by affording aids to seminaries of learning already established, by the institution of a national university, or by any other expedients, will be well worthy of a place in the deliberations of the legislature.

On Sectional Jealousy

To David Stuart

NEW YORK, 28 March, 1790.

Dear Sir: I am sorry such jealousies as you speak of should be gaining ground, and are poisoning the minds of the southern people; but admit the fact, which is alleged as the cause of them, and give it full scope, does it amount to more than what was known to every man of information before, at, and since the adoption of the constitution? Was it not always believed, that there are some points which peculiarly interest the eastern States? And did any one, who reads human nature, and more especially the character of the eastern people, conceive that they would not pursue them steadily by a combination of their force? Are there not other points, which equally concern the southern States? If these States are less tenacious of their interest, or if, whilst the eastern move in a solid phalanx to effect their

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views, the southern are always divided, which of the two is most to be blamed? That there is a diversity of interests in the Union none has denied. That this is the case, also, in every State is equally certain; and that it even extends to the counties of individual States can be as readily proved. Instance the southern and northern parts of Virginia, the upper and lower parts of South Carolina, &c. Have not the interests of these always been at variance? Witness the county of Fairfax. Have not the interests of the people of that county varied, or the inhabitants been taught to believe so? These are well known truths, and yet it did not follow, that separation was to result from the disagreement.

To constitute a dispute there must be two parties. To understand it well, both parties, and all the circumstances, must be fully heard; and, to accommodate differences, temper and mutual forbearance are requisite. Common danger brought the States into confederacy, and on their union our safety and importance depend. A spirit of accommodation was the basis of the present constitution. Can it be expected, then, that the southern or the eastern parts of the empire will succeed in all their measures? Certainly not. But I will readily grant, that more points will be carried by the latter than the former, and for the reason which has been mentioned, namely, that, in all great national questions, they move in unison, whilst the others are divided. But I ask again, which is most blameworthy, those who see, and will steadily pursue their interest, or those who cannot see, or, seeing, will not act wisely? And I will ask another question, of the highest magnitude in my mind, to wit, if the eastern and northern States are dangerous *in union*, will they be less so *in separation*? If self-interest is their governing principle, will it forsake them, or be less restrained by such an event? I hardly think it

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would. Then, independent of other considerations, what would Virginia, (and such other States as might be inclined to join her,) gain by a separation? Would they not, most unquestionably, be the weaker party?

Men, who go from hence without feeling themselves of so much consequence as they wished to be considered, and disappointed expectants, added to malignant, designing characters, who miss no opportunity of aiming a blow at the constitution, paint highly on one side, without bringing into view the arguments, which are offered on the other.

It is to be lamented, that the editors of the different gazettes in the Union do not more generally and more correctly (instead of stuffing their papers with scurrility and nonsensical declamation, which few would read if they were apprized of the contents,) publish the debates in Congress on all great national questions. And this, with no uncommon pains, every one of them might do. The principles upon which the difference of opinion arises, as well as the decisions, would then come fully before the public, and afford the best data for its judgment.

On Forms and Ceremonies

To David Stuart

NEW YORK, 15 June, 1790.

Dear Sir: In a letter of last year, to the best of my recollection, I informed you of the motives, which *compelled* me to allot a day for the reception of idle and ceremonious visits, (for it never has prevented those of sociability and friendship in the afternoon, or at any other time;) but, if I am mistaken in this, the history of this business is simply and shortly as follows. Before the

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custom was established, which now accommodates foreign characters, strangers, and others, who, from motives of curiosity, respect to the Chief Magistrate, or any other cause, are induced to call upon me, I was unable to attend to any business whatsoever; for gentlemen, consulting their own convenience rather than mine, were calling from the time I rose from breakfast, often before, until I sat down to dinner. This, as I resolved not to neglect my public duties, reduced me to the choice of one of these alternatives, either to refuse them *altogether*, or to appropriate a time for the reception of them. The former would, I well knew, be disgusting to many; the latter I expected would undergo animadversion and blazoning from those, who would find fault *with* or *without* cause. To please everybody was impossible. I therefore adopted that line of conduct, which combined public advantage with private convenience, and which in my judgment was unexceptionable in itself. That I have not been able to make bows to the taste of poor Colonel Bland, (who, by the by, I believe never saw one of them), is to be regretted, especially too, as (upon those occasions,) they were indiscriminately bestowed, and the best I was master of, would it not have been better to throw the veil of charity over them, ascribing their stiffness to the effects of age, or to the unskillfulness of my teacher, than to pride and dignity of office, which God knows has no charms for me? For I can truly say, I had rather be at Mount Vernon with a friend or two about me, than to be attended at the seat of government by the officers of state and the representatives of every power in Europe.

These visits are optional. They are made with invitation. Between the hours of three and four every day I am prepared to receive them. Gentlemen, in great numbers, come and go, chat with each

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act as they please. A porter shows them into the room, and they retire from it when they please, and without ceremony. At their first entrance, they salute me, and I them, and as many as I can talk to, I do. What pomp there is in all this, I am unable to discover. Perhaps it consists in not sitting. To this, two reasons are opposed; first, it is unusual; secondly, which is a more substantial one, because I have no room large enough to contain a third of the chairs, which would be sufficient to admit it. If it is supposed, that ostentation, or the fashions of courts (which, by the by, I believe originate oftener in convenience, not to say necessity, than is generally imagined), gave rise to this custom, I will boldly affirm, that no supposition was ever more erroneous; for, if I was to give indulgence to my inclinations, every moment that I could withdraw from the fatigue of my station should be spent in retirement. That they are not, proceeds from the sense I entertain of the propriety of giving to every one as free access, as consists with that respect, which is due to the chair of government; and that respect, I conceive, is neither to be acquired nor preserved but by observing a just medium between much state and too great familiarity.

Similar to the above, but of a more sociable kind, are the visits every Friday afternoon to Mrs. Washington, where I always am. These public meetings, and a dinner once a week to as many as my table will hold, with the references *to and from* the different departments of state, and *other* communications with *all* parts of the Union, are as much, if not more, than I am able to undergo; for I have already had within less than a year, two severe attacks, the last worse than the first. A third, more than probable, will put me to sleep with my fathers. At what distance this may be I know not. Within the last twelve months I have undergone more and severer sickness, than thirty

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preceding years afflicted me with. Put it all together I have abundant reason, however, to be thankful, that I am so well recovered; though I still feel the remains of the violent affection of my lungs; the cough, pain in my breast, and shortness in breathing not having entirely left me. I propose in the recess of Congress to visit Mount Vernon; but when this recess will happen is beyond my ken, or the ken I believe of any of its members.

On the Condition of the Country

To David Humphreys

PHILADELPHIA, 20 July, 1791.

My Dear Sir: In my last I mentioned my intention of visiting the southern States, which I have since accomplished, and have the pleasure to inform you, that I performed a journey of eighteen hundred and eighty seven miles without meeting with any interruption by sickness, bad weather, or any outward accident. Indeed, so highly were we favored, that we arrived at each place, where I proposed to make any halt, on the very day I fixed upon before we set out. The same horses performed the whole tour; and although much reduced in flesh, kept up their full spirits to the last day.

I am much pleased that I have taken this journey, as it has enabled me to see with my own eyes the situation of the country through which we travelled, and to learn more accurately the disposition of the people than I could have done by any information.

The country appears to be in a very different state, and industry and frugality are becoming more honorable than they have hitherto been.

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reigns among the people, with that disposition towards the general government, which is likely to preserve it. They begin to feel the good effects of equal laws and equal protection. The farmer finds a ready market for his produce, and the merchant calculates with more certainty on his payments. Manufactures have as yet made but little progress in that part of the country, and it will probably be a long time before they are brought to that state, to which they have already arrived in the middle and eastern parts of the Union.

Each day's experience of the government of the United States seems to confirm its establishment, and to render it more popular. A ready acquiescence in the laws made under it shows in a strong light the confidence, which the people have in their representatives, and in the upright views of those, who administer the government. At the time of passing a law imposing a duty on home-made spirits, it was vehemently affirmed by many, that such a law could never be executed in the southern States, particularly in Virginia and North Carolina. As this law came in force only on the 1st of this month, little can be said of its effects from experience; but, from the best information I could get on my journey, respecting its operation on the minds of the people, (and I took some pains to obtain information on this point,) there remains no doubt but it will be carried into effect, not only without opposition, but with very general approbation in those very parts where it was foretold, that it would never be submitted to by any one. It is possible, however, and perhaps not improbable, that some demagogue may start up, and produce and get signed some resolutions declaratory of their disapprobation of the measure.

Our public credit stands on that ground, which three years ago it would have been considered as a species of

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madness to have foretold. The astonishing rapidity, with which the newly instituted bank was filled, gives an unexampled proof (here) of the resources of our countrymen, and their confidence in public measures. On the first day of opening the subscription, the whole number of shares (twenty thousand) were taken up in one hour, and application made for upwards of four thousand shares more than were granted by the institution, besides many others that were coming from different quarters.

A Letter of Advice and Counsel

To Harriot Washington

PHILADELPHIA, 30 October, 1791.

Dear Harriot: I have received your letter of the 21st instant, and shall always be glad to hear from you. When my business will permit, inclination will not be wanting in me to acknowledge the receipt of your letters; and this I shall do more cheerfully, as it will afford me opportunities at those times of giving you occasional advice, as your situation may require.

At present I could plead a better excuse for curtailing my letter to you, than you had for shortening of yours to me, having a multitude of occupations before me, while you have nothing to do; consequently you might with equal convenience to yourself have sat down to write your letter an hour or two or even a day sooner, as to have delayed it until your cousin was on the point of sending to the post-office. I make this remark for no other reason, than to show you it is better to offer no excuse than a bad one, if at any time you should happen to fall into an error.

Occupied as my time now is, and must be during the

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sitting of Congress, I nevertheless will endeavor to inculcate upon your mind the delicacy and danger of that period, to which you are now arrived under peculiar circumstances. You are just entering into the state of womanhood, without the watchful eye of a mother to admonish, or the protecting aid of a father to advise and defend you; you may not be sensible, that you are at this moment about to be stamped with that character, which will adhere to you through life; the consequences of which you have not perhaps attended to, but be assured it is of the utmost importance that you should.

Your cousins, with whom you live, are well qualified to give you advice; and I am sure they will, if you are disposed to receive it. But, if you are disobliging, self-willed, and untowardly, it is hardly to be expected that they will engage themselves in unpleasant disputes with you, especially Fanny, whose mild and placid temper will not permit her to exceed the limits of wholesome admonition or gentle rebuke. Think, then, to what dangers a giddy girl of fifteen or sixteen must be exposed in circumstances like these. To be under but little or no control may be pleasing to a mind that does not reflect, but this pleasure cannot be of long duration; and reason, too late perhaps, may convince you of the folly of misspending time. You are not to learn, I am certain, that your fortune is small. Supply the want of it, then, with a well cultivated mind, with dispositions to industry and frugality, with gentleness of manners, obliging temper, and such qualifications as will attract notice, and recommend you to a happy establishment for life.

You might, instead of associating with those from whom you can derive nothing that is good, but may have observed every thing that is deceitful, lying, and bad, become the intimate companion of, and aid to, your cousin

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in the domestic concerns of the family. Many girls, before they have arrived at your age, have been found so trustworthy as to take the whole trouble of a family from their mothers; but it is by a steady and rigid attention to the rules of propriety, that such confidence is obtained, and nothing would give me more pleasure than to hear that you had acquired it. The merits and benefits of it would redound more to your advantage in your progress through life, and to the person with whom you may in due time form a matrimonial connexion, than to any others; but to none would such a circumstance afford more real satisfaction, than to your affectionate uncle.

A Letter of Friendly Criticism

To Gouverneur Morris

PHILADELPHIA, 28 January, 1792.

My dear Sir: The official communications from the secretary of state, accompanying this letter, will convey to you the evidence of my nomination and appointment of you to be minister plenipotentiary for the United States at the court of France; and my assurance, that both were made with *all my heart*, will, I am persuaded, satisfy you as to that fact. I wish I could add, that the advice and *consent* flowed from a similar source. Candor forbids it, and friendship requires, that I should assign the causes, as far as they have come to my knowledge.

Whilst your abilities, knowledge in the affairs of this country, and disposition to serve it, were adduced and asserted on one hand; you were charged, on the other hand, with levity and imprudence of conversation and conduct. It was urged, that your habits of expression indi-

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cated a *hauteur* disgusting to those, who happen to differ from you in sentiment; and among a people, who study civility and politeness more than any other nation, it must be displeasing; that in France you were considered as a favorer of aristocracy, and unfriendly to its revolution (I suppose they meant *constitution*); that, under this impression, you could not be an acceptable public character, of consequence would not be able, however willing, to promote the interest of this country in an essential degree; that in England you indiscreetly communicated the purport of your mission in the first instance to the minister of France, at that court, who, availing himself in the same moment of the occasion, gave it the appearance of a movement through his court; this, and other circumstances of a similar nature, added to a close intercourse with the opposition members, occasioned distrust, and gave displeasure to the ministry, which was the cause, it is said, of that reserve which you experienced in negotiating the business, which had been intrusted to you.

But not to go further into detail, I will place the ideas of your political adversaries in the light, which their arguments have presented them to me, vizt, that the promptitude, with which your lively and brilliant imagination is displayed, allows too little time for deliberation and correction, and is the primary cause of those sallies, which too often offend, and of that ridicule of characters, which begets enmity not easy to be forgotten, but which might easily be avoided, if it was under the control of more caution and prudence; in a word, that it is indispensably necessary, that more circumspection should be observed by our representatives abroad, than they conceive you are inclined to adopt.

In this statement you have the *pros* and *cons*. By reciting them I give you a proof of my friendship, if I give

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none of my policy or judgment. I do it on the presumption, that a mind, conscious of its own rectitude, fears not what is said of it, but will bid defiance to and despise shafts, that are not barbed with accusations against honor or integrity; and because I have the fullest confidence (supposing the allegations to be founded in whole or part) that you would find no difficulty, being apprized of the exceptionable light in which they are viewed, and considering yourself as the representative of this country, to effect a change, and thereby silence, in the most unequivocal and satisfactory manner, your political opponents.

Characterization of the General Officers

Opinion of the General Officers

The following list contain the names of all the General officers now living in this country, as low as *actual* Brigadiers inclusively.—Except those who it is conjectured would not, from age, want of health—& other circumstances, come forward by any inducements that could be offered to them—& such as ought not to be named for the important trust of Commander in Chief.

Major General Lincoln

Sober, honest, brave and sensible, but infirm, past the vigor of life—& reluctantly (if offered to him) would accept the appointment.—

Major General Baron de Steuben

Sensible, sober & brave, well acquainted with Tactics & with the arrangement & discipline of an army.—High

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in his ideas of subordination—impetuous in his temper—ambitious—and a foreigner.—

Major General Moultrie

Brave, & it is believed accommodating in his temper—served the whole of last war; & has been an officer in the preceding one, at least had been engaged in an Expedition against the Cherokees; having defeated them in one or two considerable actions.—What the resources, or powers of his mind are—how active he may be, and whether temperate or not, are points I cannot speak to with decision, because I have had little or no opportunities to form an opinion of him.—

Brigadier (but by brevet Majr General) McIntosh

Is old and inactive;—supposed to be honest and brave.—Not much known in the Union, and therefore would not obtain much confidence, or command much respect;—either in the community or the army.

Majr General (by brevet) Wayne

More active and enterprising than Judicious & cautious.—No œconomist it is feared:—open to flattery—vain—easily imposed upon and liable to be drawn into scrapes. Too indulgent (the effect perhaps of some of the causes just mentioned) to his officers and men.—Whether sober—or a little addicted to the bottle, I know not.

Majr General (by brevet) Weedon

Not supposed to be an Officer of much resource, though not deficient in a competent share of understanding—

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rather addicted to ease & pleasure—& no enemy it is said to the bottle—never has had his name brot. forward on this acct.

Major General (by brevet) Hand

A sensible & judicious man;—his integrity unimpeached;—and was esteemed a pretty good officer.—But if I recollect rightly, not a very active one.—He has never been charged with intemperance to my knowledge;—His name has rarely been mentioned under the present difficulty of chusing an officer to comm'd, but this may, in a great measure be owing to his being at a distance.—

Mjr General (by brevet) Scott

Brave and means well; but is an officer of inadequate abilities for extensive command;—&, by report, is addicted to drinking.—

Mjr General (by brevet) Huntington

Sober sensible and very discreet.—Has never discovr'd much enterprise; yet, no doubt has ever been entertained of his want of spirit, or firmness.

Brigadier General Wilkinson

Is, *by brevet* Senr. to those whose names follow—but the appointment to this rank was merely honorary,—and as he was but a short time in service, little can be said of his abilities as an Officer.—He is lively, sensible, pompous and ambitious, but whether sober, or not, is unknown to me.

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Brigadier General Gist

Little has been said of his qualifications as a General Officer—His activity & attention to duty is somewhat doubtful, tho' his spirit I believe, is unimpeached.—

Brigadier General Irvine

Is sober, tolerably sensible and prudent. It is said he is an æconomist; and supported his authority whilst he was entrusted with a separate command; but I have no recollection of any circumstance that marks him as a decidedly good, or indifferent officer.

Brigadier General Morgan

Has been fortunate, & has met with eclat.—Yet there are different opinions with respect to his abilities as an officer.—He is accused of using improper means to obtain certificates from the soldiers—It is said he has been (if the case is not so now) intemperate: that he is troubled with palpitation which often lays him up; and it is not denied that he is illiterate.

Brigadier General Williams—

Is a sensible man, but not without vanity. No doubt, I believe, is entertained of his firmness:—and it is thought he does not want activity,—but it is not easy, where there is nothing conspicuous in a character, to pronounce decidedly upon a military man who has always acted under the immediate orders of a superior officer, unless he had been seen frequently in action.—The discipline, interior æconomy and police of his Corps is the best evidence one can have of his talents in this line, and of this, in the case

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of Genl. Williams I can say nothing; as he was appointed a Brigadier after he left the Northern to join the Southern army.—But a material objection to him is delicate health (if there has been no change in his constitution),—for he has gone to the Sweet Springs two or three years successively in such bad health as to afford little hope of his even returning from them.

Brigadier General Rufus Putnam—

Possesses a strong mind—and is a discreet man.—No question has ever been made (that has come to my knowledge) of his want of firmness. In short, there is nothing conspicuous in his character—and he is but little known out of his own state, and a narrow circle.

Brigadier Genl (by brevet) Pinckney—

A Colonel since Sept. 16th, 1776; but appointed a Brigadr. by brevet at the close of the War, *only*.—In this Gentleman many valuable qualities are to be found.—He is of unquestionable bravery—is a man of strict honor, erudition & good sense: and it is said has made Tactics a study—But what his spirit for enterprise is—whether active or indolent;—or fitted for arrangement, I am unable to say—never having had any opportunity to form a judgment of his talents as a military character.—The capture of Charleston put an end to his military services; but his Junr. Rank, and being little known in this part of the Union, are the two considerations most opposed to him,—particularly the latter, as it is more than probable his being a prisoner prevented his promotion: which ought not to be any bar to his ranking as a Brigadier from the time that others of his standing as a colonel, were promoted.

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On Mutual Forbearance

To Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State
[Private]

MOUNT VERNON, 23 August, 1792.

My dear Sir: How unfortunate, and how much is it to be regretted that, while we are encompassed on all sides with avowed enemies and insidious friends, internal dissensions should be harrowing and tearing our vitals. The last, to me, is the most serious, the most alarming, and the most afflicting of the two; and, without more charity for the opinions and acts of one another in governmental matters, or some more infallible criterion by which the truth of speculative opinions, before they have undergone the test of experience, are to be forejudged, than has yet fallen to the lot of fallibility, I believe it will be difficult, if not impracticable, to manage the reins of government, or to keep the parts of it together; for if, instead of laying our shoulders to the machine after measures are decided on, one pulls this way and another that, before the utility of the thing is fairly tried, it must inevitably be torn asunder; and in my opinion the fairest prospect of happiness and prosperity, that ever was presented to man, will be lost perhaps *for ever*.

My earnest wish and my fondest hope, therefore, is, that instead of wounding suspicions and irritating charges, there may be liberal allowances, mutual forbearances, and temporizing yieldings *on all sides*. Under the exercise of these, matters will go on smoothly, and, if possible more prosperously. Without them, every thing must rub; the wheels of government will clog; our enemies will triumph, and, by throwing their weight into the disaffected scale,

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may accomplish the ruin of the goodly fabric we have been erecting.

I do not mean to apply this advice, or these observations, to any particular person or character. I have given them in the same general terms to other officers of the government; because the disagreements which have risen from difference of opinions, and the attacks, which have been made upon almost all the measures of government, and most of its executive officers, have for a long time past filled me with painful sensations, and cannot fail, I think, of producing unhappy consequences at home and abroad.

On Charity of Judgment

To Alexander Hamilton, Secretary of the Treasury
[Private]

MOUNT VERNON, 26 August, 1792.

My dear Sir: Differences in political opinions are as unavoidable as, to a certain point, they may perhaps be necessary; but it is exceedingly to be regretted, that subjects cannot be discussed with temper on the one hand, or decisions submitted to without having the motives, which led to them, improperly implicated on the other; and this regret borders on chagrin, when we find that men of abilities, zealous patriots, having the same *general* objects in view, and the same upright intentions to prosecute them, will not exercise more charity in deciding on the opinions and actions of one another. When matters get to such lengths, the natural inference is, that both sides have strained the cords beyond their bearing, and that a middle course would be found the best, until experience shall have decided on the right way, or (which is not to be expected,

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because it is denied to mortals) there shall be some infallible rule by which we could forejudge events.

Having premised these things, I would fain hope, that liberal allowances will be made for the political opinions of each other; and, instead of those wounding suspicions, and irritating charges, with which some of our gazettes are so strongly impregnated, and cannot fail, if persevered in, of pushing matters to extremity, and thereby to tear the machine asunder, that there might be mutual forbearances and temporizing yieldings *on all sides*. Without these, I do not see how the reins of government are to be managed, or how the Union of the States can be much longer preserved.

How unfortunate would it be, if a fabric so goodly, erected under so many providential circumstances, and in its first stages having acquired such respectability, should, from diversity of sentiments, or internal obstructions to some of the acts of government (for I cannot prevail on myself to believe, that these measures are as yet the deliberate acts of a determined party), be harrowing our vitals in such a manner as to have brought us to the verge of dissolution. Melancholy thought! But, at the same time that it shows the consequences of diversified opinions, when pushed with too much tenacity, it exhibits evidence also of the necessity of accommodation, and of the propriety of adopting such healing measures as may restore harmony to the discordant members of the Union, and the governing powers of it.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On Abuse of the Government

To Edmund Randolph, Attorney General

[Private]

MOUNT VERNON, 26 August, 1792.

My dear Sir: I shall be happy, to see a cessation of the abuses of public officers, and of those attacks upon almost every measure of government, with which some of the gazettes are so strongly impregnated; and which cannot fail, if preserved in with the malignancy with which they now teem, of rending the Union asunder. The seeds of discontent, distrust, and irritation, which are so plentifully sown, can scarcely fail to produce this effect, and to mar that prospect of happiness, which perhaps never beamed with more effulgence upon any people under the sun; and this too at a time, when all Europe are gazing with admiration at the brightness of our prospects. And for what is all this? Among other things, to afford nuts for our transatlantic (what shall I call them?) foes.

In a word, if the government and the officers of it are to be the constant theme for newspaper abuse, and this too without condescending to investigate the motives or the facts, it will be impossible, I conceive, for any man living to manage the helm or to keep the machine together. But I am running from my text, and therefore will only add assurances of the affectionate esteem and regard, with which I am. &c.

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On Use of His Name in Electioneering

To John Francis Mercer

MOUNT VERNON, 26 September, 1792.

Sir: I do not scruple to declare to you that I was not a little displeased to find by a letter from Captn. Campbell, to a gentleman in this neighborhood, that my name had been freely used by you or your friends for electioneering purposes, when I had never associated your name and the election together; and when there had been the most scrupulous and pointed caution observed on my part, not to express a sentiment respecting the fitness or unfitness of any candidate for representation that cou'd be construed, by the most violent torture of the words, into an interference in favor of one, or to the prejudice of another. Conceiving that the exercise of an influence (if I really possess any) however remote would be highly improper; as the people ought to be entirely at liberty to chuse whom they pleased to represent them in Congress. Having pursued this line of conduct *steadily*, my surprise, and consequent declaration can be a matter of no wonder, when I read the following words in the letter above alluded to.

"I arrived yesterday from Philada. since which I find Colo. Mercer has openly declared, that Mr. Richd. Sprigg, Junr., informed him, that Bushrod Washington told him that the President in his presence declared, that he hoped Colo. Mercer would not be left out of the next representation in Congress; and added that he thought him the best representative that now goes or ever did go to that Body from this State."

I instantly declared to the person who shewed me the

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Letter;—"that to the best of my recollection, I never had exchanged a word to, or before Bushrod Washington on the subject of your election, much less to have given such a decided opinion. That such a measure would have been incompatible with the rule I had prescribed to myself, and which I had invariably observed, of not interfering directly, or indirectly with the suffrages of the people, in the choice of their representatives,—and added, that I wished B. Washington might be called upon to certify what, or whether any conversation had ever passed between us on this subject, as it was my desire that every thing should stand upon its proper foundations." Other sentiments have been reported as mine, that are equally erroneous.

Whether you have, upon any occasion, expressed yourself in disrespectful terms of me, I know not—it has never been the subject of my enquiry. If nothing impeaching my honor or honesty is said, I care little for the rest. I have pursued one uniform course for three score years, and am happy in *believing* that the world have thought it a right one—of it's being so, I am so well satisfied myself, that I shall not depart from it by turning either to the right or to the left, until I arrive at the end of my pilgrimage.

On the Character of Harriot Washington

To Mrs. Betty Lewis

MOUNT VERNON, 7 October [1792]

My dear Sister: As Mrs. Washington and myself expect to set out to-morrow for Philadelphia, I have taken advantage of the good opportunity afforded by Mr. Robt. Lewis of sending Harriet to Fredericksburg. It is done

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at this time (notwithstanding your proposed visit to Albe-marle), 1st. because it would be improper to leave her here after we are all gone; 2nd. because there would be no person to accompany her down afterwards; and 3rd. because it might be inconvenient for her to travel alone.

She comes, as Mrs. Washington informs me, very well provided with everything proper for a girl in her situation. This much I know, that she costs me enough. I do not however, want you (or any one else) to do more by her than merely to admit her into your family, whilst this House is uninhabited by a female white woman, and thereby rendered an unfit place for her to remain at. I shall continue to do for her what I have already done for seven years past, and that is to furnish her with such reasonable and proper necessities as she may stand in need of, notwithstanding I have had both her brothers upon my hands and I have been obliged to pay several hundred pounds out of my own pocket for their board, schooling, and cloathing, &c., for more than the period aforementioned, their father's estate being unable to discharge the executions as fast as they are issued against it.

Harriet has sense enough but no disposition to industry, nor to be careful of her cloathes. Your example and admonition may with proper restraints overcome the two last; and to that end I wish you would examine her cloathes and direct her in their use and application of them, for without this they will be (I am told) dabbled about in every hole and corner, and her best things always in use. Fanny was too easy, too much of her own indolent turn, and had too little authority to cause either by precept or example any change in this for the better, and Mrs. Washington's absence has been injurious to her in many respects. But she is young and, with good advice, may yet make a fine woman. If, notwithstanding the suggestion

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that she is well provided with everything (except a cloak which may not be had in Alexandria and may be got at Fredericksburg,) a deficiency is found and you wish to supply it, there will be no occasion for your laying in advance more than ten days, as I could at any time remit a bank note in a letter in four days after I was made acquainted with the amount. I do not mean by this to launch into expensiveness; she has no pretensions to it, nor would the state of my finances enable me to indulge her in that if she had.

Mrs. Washington joins me in best wishes for the perfect restoration of your health, and every other blessing.

On His Confidence in Jefferson's Loyalty

To Thomas Jefferson, Secretary of State

[Private]

18 October, 1792.

My dear Sir: I did not require the evidence of the extracts, which you enclosed to me, to convince me of your attachment to the constitution of the United States, or of your disposition to promote the general welfare of this country; but I regret, deeply regret, the difference in opinions, which have arisen and divided you and another principal officer of the government; and wish devoutly there would be an accommodation of them by mutual yieldings.

A measure of this sort would produce harmony and consequent good in our public councils. The contrary will inevitably introduce confusion and serious mischiefs; and for what? Because mankind cannot think alike, but would adopt different means to attain the same ends. For I will frankly and solemnly declare, that I believe the views of

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both of you to be pure and well-meant, and that experience only will decide, with respect to the salubrity of the measures, which are the subjects of dispute. Why, then, when some of the best citizens in the United States, men of discernment, uniform and tried patriots, who have no sinister views to promote, but are chaste in their ways of thinking and acting, are to be found, some on one side and some on the other of the questions, which have caused these agitations, should either of you be so tenacious of your opinions, as to make no allowances for those of the other? I could, and indeed was about to add more on this interesting subject, but will forbear, at least for the present, after expressing a wish, that the cup, which has been presented to us may not be snatched from our lips by a discordance of action, when I am persuaded there is no discordance in your views. I have a great, a sincere esteem and regard for you both, and ardently wish that some line could be marked out by which both of you could walk.

Sentiments on Reëlection

To Henry Lee, Governor of Virginia

PHILADELPHIA, 20 January, 1793.

Dear Sir: I have been favored with your letter of the 6th instant, congratulatory on my re-election to the chair of government. A mind must be insensible indeed, not to be gratefully impressed by so distinguished and honorable a testimony of public approbation and confidence; and as I suffered my name to be contemplated on this occasion, it is more than probable that I should, for a moment, have experienced chagrin, if my re-election had not been by a pretty respectable vote. But to say I feel pleasure from

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the prospect of commencing another tour of duty would be a departure from truth; for, however it might savor of affectation in the opinion of the world (who, by the by, can only guess at my sentiments, as it never has been troubled with them), my particular and confidential friends well know, that it was after a long and painful conflict in my own breast, that I was withheld, (by considerations which are not necessary to be mentioned,) from requesting in time, that no vote might be thrown away upon me, it being my fixed determination to return to the walks of private life at the end of my term.

A Letter of Condolence

To Frances Washington

PHILADELPHIA, 24 February, 1793.

My dear Fanny: To you, who so well know the affectionate regard I had for our departed friend, it is unnecessary to describe the sorrow with which I was afflicted at the news of his death, although it was an event I had expected many weeks before it happened. To express this sorrow with the force I feel it, would answer no other purpose than to revive in your breast that poignancy of anguish, which by this time I hope is abated.

The object of this letter is to convey to your mind the warmest assurances of my love, friendship, and disposition to serve you. These also I profess to have, in an eminent degree, for your children.

What plan you have contemplated, or whether, in so short a time, you have contemplated any, is unknown to me; and therefore I add, that the one which strikes me most favorably, by being best calculated to promote the

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interest of yourself and children, is to return to your old habitation at Mount Vernon. You can go to no place where you will be more welcome, nor to any, where you can live at less expense or trouble. Matters at Mount Vernon are now so arranged, as to be under the care of responsible persons, and so they may continue; which would ease you of that anxiety, which the care of so large a family otherwise would naturally involve you in. It is unnecessary to observe to you, that housekeeping, under any circumstances and with the best economy, is expensive; and, where provision for it is to be made, will be found, I fear, beyond your means.

You might bring my niece, Harriot Washington, with you for a companion, whose conduct I hear with pleasure has given much satisfaction to my sister. I shall, under my present view of things, be at Mount Vernon about the 1st of April, for perhaps a fortnight; but your aunt and family will not, I expect, be there before the middle of July. My affectionate regards attend you and your children; and I shall always be your sincere friend.

On Newspaper Abuse

To Henry Lee, Governor of Virginia

[Private]

PHILADELPHIA, 21 July, 1793.

Dear Sir: That there are in this, as well as in all other countries, discontented characters, I well know; as also that these characters are actuated by very different views; some good, from an opinion that the measures of the general government are impure; some bad, and, if I might be allowed to use so harsh an expression, diabolical, inas-

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much as they are not only meant to impede the measures of that government generally, but more especially, (as a great mean towards the accomplishment of it,) to destroy the confidence, which it is necessary for the people to place, (until they have unequivocal proof of demerit,) in their public servants. For in this light I consider myself, whilst I am an occupant of office; and if they were to go further and call me their slave, during this period, I would not dispute the point.

But in what will this abuse terminate? The result, as it respects myself, I care not; for I have a consolation within, that no earthly efforts can deprive me of, and that is, that neither ambitious nor interested motives have influenced my conduct. The arrows of malevolence, therefore, however barbed and well pointed, never can reach the most vulnerable part of me; though, whilst I am *up* as a *mark*, they will be continually aimed. The publications in Freneau's and Bache's papers are outrages on common decency; and they progress in that style, in proportion as their pieces are treated with contempt, and are passed by in silence, by those at whom they are aimed. The tendency of them, however, is too obvious to be mistaken by men of cool and dispassionate minds, and, in my opinion, ought to alarm them; because it is difficult to prescribe bounds to the effect. The light in which you endeavored to place the views and conduct of this country to M. Genet, and the sound policy thereof, as it respected his own, was unquestionably the true one, and such as a man of penetration, left to himself, would most certainly have viewed them in; but *mum* on this head. Time may unfold more than prudence ought to disclose at present. As we are told that you have exchanged the rugged and dangerous field of Mars for the soft and pleasurable bed of Venus I do in this, as I shall in every thing you may

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pursue like unto it, good and laudable, wish you all imaginable success and happiness. With esteem and regard, I am, &c.

On the Conduct of Government

To Edmund Pendleton

MOUNT VERNON, 23 September, 1793.

My dear Sir: With very sincere pleasure I received your private letter of the 11th instant. The pleasure was not a little enhanced by your reiterated assurance of my still holding that place in your estimation, of which, on more occasions than one, you have given me the most flattering testimony, highly gratifying to my mind. This assurance came opportunely, as I had begun to conceive, though unable to assign a cause, that some part of my public conduct, (however well meant my endeavors,) had appeared unfavorably in your eyes; for you will please to recollect, that formerly you promised me, and I always expected, an annual letter from you. It is now, (if my memory has not failed me,) at least four years since I have had that pleasure.

Sequestered you say you are from the world, and know little of what is transacting in it, but from newspapers. I regret this exceedingly. I wish you had more to do on the great theatre, and that your means of information were co-equal to your abilities and the disposition I know you to possess to judge properly of public measures. It would be better, perhaps, for that public, it should be so; for, be assured, we have some infamous papers, calculated to disturb the public mind, if not absolutely intended to do mischief.

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With respect to the fiscal conduct of the Secretary of the Treasury, I will say nothing, because an inquiry, more than probable, will be instituted next session of Congress into some of the allegations against him, which eventually may involve the whole; and because, if I mistake not, he will seek, rather than shrink from an investigation. A fair opportunity will, in that case, be offered the impartial world to form a just estimate of his acts, and probably of his motives. No one, I will venture to say, wishes more devoutly than I do, that they may be probed to the bottom, be the result what it will.

With the most scrupulous truth I can assure you, that your free and unreserved opinion, upon any public measure of importance, will always be acceptable to me, whether it respects men or measures; and on no man do I wish it to be expressed more fully than on myself, for, as I can conscientiously declare, I have no object in view incompatible with the constitution, and the obvious interests of this country, nor no earthly desire *half* so strong as that of returning to the walks of private life; so, of consequence, I only wish, whilst I am a servant of the public, to know the will of my masters, that I may govern myself accordingly.

You do me no more than justice when you suppose, that, from motives of respect to the legislature (and I might add from my interpretation of the constitution), I give my signature to many bills, with which my judgment is at variance. In saying this, however, I allude to *no particular* act. From the nature of the constitution I must approve all the parts of a bill, or reject it *in toto*. To do the latter can only be justified upon the clear and obvious ground of propriety; and I never had such confidence in my own faculty of judging, as to be ever tenacious of the opinions I may have imbibed in doubtful cases.

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Mrs. Washington, who enjoys tolerable health, joins me most cordially in best wishes to you and Mrs. Pendleton. I wish you may live long, continue in good health, and end your days, as you have been wearing them away, happily and respected. Always and very affectionately yours, &c.

Letter of Regrets

To Thomas Jefferson

PHILADELPHIA, 1 January, 1794.

Dear Sir: I yesterday received, with sincere regret, your resignation of the office of Secretary of State. Since it has been impossible to prevail upon you to forego any longer the indulgence of your desire for private life, the event, however anxious I am to avert it, must be submitted to.

But I cannot suffer you to leave your station without assuring you, that the opinion, which I had formed of your integrity and talents, and which dictated your original nomination, has been confirmed by the fullest experience; and that both have been eminently displayed in the discharge of your duty.

Let a conviction of my most earnest prayers for your happiness accompany you in your retirement; and while I accept, with the warmest thanks, your solicitude for my welfare, I beg you to believe that I always am, dear Sir, &c.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

An Offer of Office

To Charles Cotesworth Pinckney

[Confidential]

PHILADELPHIA, 22 January, 1794.

My Dear Sir: I have cause to believe, that the private concerns of the gentleman, who is now at the head of the department of war, will occasion his resignation of that office, unless imperious circumstances (which Heaven avert) should force us into war with any belligerent powers, and, under such circumstances, he should hold it dishonorable to retreat from his post.

Towards or at the close of the present session of Congress, (which is hardly to be expected before April, if then,) this event, if it takes place, is likely to happen. Will you, upon this hypothesis, allow me to indulge a hope, that you would fill his place? It is not for the mere detail duties of the office I am in pursuit of a character. These might be well executed by a less important one than yours; but, as the officer, who is at the head of that department, is a branch of the executive, and called to its councils upon interesting questions of national importance, he ought to be a man, not only of competent skill in the science of war, but possessing a general knowledge of political subjects of known attachment to the government we have chosen, and of proved integrity. To whom, then, can I turn my eyes with more propriety than to you? I mean not to compliment, but to express the real sentiments of my heart.

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On His Policy as to Appointments

To James McHenry

[Private]

PHILADELPHIA, 8 April, 1794.

Dear Sir: Your private letters of the 31st of March and 3d instant have been duly received. Although it is a rare, if not an entire new thing with me, to answer letters applying for appointments, yet, from motives of esteem and regard, and our former connexion in public life, I shall acknowledge the receipt of yours on this head; although I can say nothing more on the subject, than to explain the motives, which have imposed silence upon me on these occasions. They are,

First, because letters of this sort are so numerous, that to give them a civil answer would employ too much of my time.

Secondly, because civil answers might be construed to mean more than was intended; and,

Thirdly, because coeval with my inauguration I resolved firmly, that no man should ever charge me *justly* with deception. Abundant reason I have had to rejoice at this determination; for I have experienced the necessity, in a variety of instances, of hardening my heart against indulgences of my warmest inclination and friendship, and, from a combination of causes, as well as mere fitness of character, to depart from first impressions and first intentions with regard to nominations; which has proved most unequivocally the propriety of the maxim I had adopted, of never committing myself, until the moment the appointment is to be made, when, from the best information I can

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obtain, and a full view of circumstances, my judgment is formed.

On American and English Agriculture

To Sir John Sinclair

PHILADELPHIA, 20 July, 1794.

Sir: I have read with peculiar pleasure and approbation the work you patronize, so much to your own honor and the utility of the public. Such a general view of the Agriculture in the several counties of Great Britain, is extremely interesting, and cannot fail of being very beneficial to the agriculture concerns of your country; and to those of every other wherein they are read; and must entitle you to their warmest thanks, for having set such a plan on foot and for prosecuting it with the zeal and intelligence you do.—I am so much pleased with the plan and execution myself as to pray you to have the goodness to direct your book-seller to continue them accompanied with the [charge], which shall be paid to his order, or remitted so soon as the amount is made known to me. When the whole are received I will promote, as far as in me lies, the reprinting of them here.

I know of no pursuit in which more real and important services can be rendered to any country, than by improving its agriculture,—its breed of useful animals—and other branches of a husbandman's cares:—nor can I conceive any plan more conducive to this end than the one you have introduced for bringing to view the actual state of them in all parts of the Kingdom—by which good and bad habits are exhibited in a manner too plain to be misconceived; for the accounts given to the British board of Agriculture appear in general to be drawn up in a masterly

LETTERS AND ADDRESSES

manner, so as fully to answer the expectations formed in the excellent plan which produced them, affording at the same time a fund of information useful in political œconomy—serviceable in all countries.

Commons, Tithes, Tenantry (of which we feel nothing in this country) are in the list of impediments, I perceive, to perfection in English farming, and taxes are heavy deductions from the net profit thereof. Of these we have none, or so light as hardly to be felt. Your system of Agriculture, it must be confessed, is in a stile superior and of course much more expensive than ours; but when the balance at the end of the year is struck by deducting the taxes, poor rates, and incidental charges of every kind from the produce of the land, in the two countries no doubt can remain in which scale it is to be found. It will be some time I fear before an Agricultural society, with congressional aids, will be established in this country. We must walk as other countries have done before we can run. Smaller societies must prepare the way for greater; but with the lights before us I hope we shall not be so slow in maturation as older nations have been. An attempt, as you will perceive by the enclosed outlines of a plan, is making to establish a State society in Pennsylvania for agricultural improvements. If it succeeds it will be a step in the ladder—at present it is too much in embryo to decide on the result.

Our domestic animals (as well as our agriculture) are inferior to yours in point of size, but this does not proceed from any defect in the stamina of them; but to deficient care in providing for their support; experience having abundantly evinced that where our pastures are as well improved as the soil and climate will admit,—where a competent store of wholesome provender is laid up and proper care used in serving it—that our horses, black

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cattle, sheep, &c.—are not inferior to the best of their respective kinds which have been imported from England. Nor is the wool of our sheep inferior to that of the common sort with you.—As a proof—after the peace of Paris in 1783, and my return to the occupation of a farmer, I paid particular attention to my breed of sheep (of which I usually kept about seven or eight hundred). By this attention, at the shearing of 1789, the fleeces yielded me the average quantity of $5\frac{1}{4}$ of wool—a fleece of which promiscuously taken, I sent to Mr. Arthur Young, who put it for examination into the hands of manufacturers. These pronounced it to be equal in quality to the Kentish wool. In this same year (*i. e.* 1789) I was again called from home, and have not had it in my power since to pay any attention to my farms. The consequence of which is, that my sheep at the last shearing, yielded me not more than $2\frac{1}{2}$.

On Attempts to Destroy the Government

To Henry Lee, Governor of Virginia

[Private]

GERMANTOWN, 26 August, 1794.

Dear Sir: It is with equal pride and satisfaction I add, that, as far as my information extends, this insurrection is viewed with universal indignation and abhorrence, except by those, who have never missed an opportunity by side blows or otherwise to aim their shafts at the general government; and even among these there is not a spirit hardy enough yet openly to justify the daring infractions of law and order; but by palliatives are attempting to suspend all proceedings against the insurgents, until Con-

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gress shall have decided on the case, thereby intending to gain time and if possible to make the evil more extensive, more formidable, and of course more difficult to counteract and subdue.

I consider this insurrection as the first *formidable* fruit of the Democratic Societies, brought forth, I believe, too prematurely for their own views, which may contribute to the annihilation of them.

That these societies were instituted by the *artful and designing* members (many of their body I have no doubt mean well, but know little of the real plan,) primarily to sow the seeds of jealousy and distrust among the people of the government, by destroying all confidence in the administration of it, and that these doctrines have been budding and blowing ever since, is not new to any one, who is acquainted with the character of their leaders, and has been attentive to their manœuvres. I early gave it as my opinion to the confidential characters around me, that, if these societies were not counteracted, (not by prosecutions, the ready way to make them grow stronger,) or did not fall into disesteem from the knowledge of their origin, and the views with which they had been instituted by their father, Genet, for purposes well known to the government, that they would shake the government to its foundation. Time and circumstances have confirmed me in this opinion; and I deeply regret the probable consequences; not as they will affect me personally, for I have not long to act on this theatre, and sure I am that not a man amongst them can be more anxious to put me aside, than I am to sink into the profoundest retirement, but because I see, under a display of popular and fascinating guises, the most diabolical attempts to destroy the best fabric of human government and happiness, that has ever been presented for the acceptance of mankind.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

A part of the plan for creating discord is, I perceive, to make me say things of others, and others of me, which have no foundation in truth. The first, in many instances I *know* to be the case; and the second I believe to be so. But truth or falsehood is immaterial to them, provided the objects are promoted.

Under this head may be classed, I conceive, what it is reported I have said of Mr. Henry, and what Mr. Jefferson is reported to have said of me; on both of which, particularly the first, I mean to dilate a little. With solemn truth then I can declare, that I never expressed such sentiments of that gentleman, as from your letter he has been led to believe. I had heard, it is true, that he retained his enmity to the constitution; but with very peculiar pleasure I learnt from Colonel Coles, who I am sure will recollect it, that Mr. Henry was acquiescent in his conduct, and that, though he could not give up his opinion respecting the constitution, yet unless he should be called upon by official duty, he would express no sentiment unfriendly to the exercise of the powers of a government, which had been chosen by a majority of the people, or words to this effect.

With respect to the words said to have been uttered by Mr. Jefferson, they would be enigmatical to those, who are acquainted with the characters about me, unless supposed to be spoken ironically; and in that case they are too injurious to me, and have too little foundation in truth, to be ascribed to him. There could not be the trace of doubt on his mind of predilection in mine towards Great Britain or her politics, unless, (which I do not believe,) he has set me down as one of the most deceitful and uncandid men living; because, not only in private conversations between ourselves on this subject, but in my meetings with the confidential servants of the public, he has heard me often,

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when occasions presented themselves, express very different sentiments, with an energy that could not be mistaken by *any one* present.

Having determined, as far as lay within the power of the executive, to keep this country in a state of neutrality, I have made my public conduct accord with the system; and, whilst so acting as a public character, consistency and propriety as a private man forbid those intemperate expressions in favor of one nation, or to the prejudice of another, which many have indulged themselves in, and I will venture to add, to the embarrassment of government, without producing any good to the country.

On the Whiskey Rebellion

To Burges Ball

PHILADELPHIA, 25 September, 1794.

Dear Sir: I hear with the greatest pleasure of the spirit, which so generally pervades the militia of every State, that has been called upon on the present occasion; and of the decided discountenance the incendiaries of public peace and order have met with in their attempts to spread their nefarious doctrines, with a view to poison and discontent the minds of the people against the government; particularly by endeavoring to have it believed, that their liberties were assailed, and that all the wicked and abominable measures that can be devised under specious guises are practised to sap the constitution, and lay the foundation of future slavery.

The insurrection in the western counties of this State is a striking evidence of this, and may be considered as the first ripe *fruit* of the Democratic Societies. I did not,

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I must confess, expect it would come to maturity so soon, though I never had a doubt that such conduct would produce some such issue, if it did not meet the frowns of those, who were well disposed to order and good government in time; for can any thing be more absurd, more arrogant, or more pernicious to the peace of society, than for self-created bodies, forming themselves into permanent censors, and under the shade of night in a conclave resolving that acts of Congress, which have undergone the most deliberate and solemn discussion by the representatives of the people, chosen for the express purpose and bringing with them from the different parts of the Union the sense of their constituents, endeavoring as far as the nature of the thing will admit to form *their will* into laws for the government of the whole; I say, under these circumstances, for a self-created *permanent* body (for no one denies the right of the people to meet occasionally to petition for, or remonstrate against, any act of the legislature) to declare that *this act* is unconstitutional, and *that act* is pregnant with mischiefs, and that all, who vote contrary to their dogmas, are actuated by selfish motives or under foreign influence, nay, are pronounced traitors to their country? Is such a stretch of arrogant presumption to be reconciled with laudable motives, especially when we see the same set of men endeavoring to destroy all confidence in the administration, by arraigning all its acts, without knowing on what ground or with what information it proceeds?

These things were evidently intended, and could not fail without counteraction, to disquiet the public mind; but I hope and trust this will work their own curse; especially when it is known more generally than it is, that the Democratic Society of this place, from which the others have emanated, was instituted by M. Genet for the express

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purpose of dissension, and to draw a line between the people and the government, after he found the officers of the latter would not yield to the hostile measures in which he wanted to embroil this country.

Laws must be Executed

To Major-General Daniel Morgan

CARLISLE, 8 October, 1794.

Dear Sir: I am perfectly in sentiment with you, that the business we are drawn out upon should be effectually executed, and that the daring and factious spirit, which has arisen (to overturn the laws and to subvert the constitution,) ought to be subdued. If this is done, there is an end of, and we may bid adieu to, all government in this country, except mob and club government, from whence nothing but anarchy and confusion can ensue. If the minority, and a small one too, is suffered to dictate to the majority, after measures have undergone the most solemn discussions by the representatives of the people, and their will through this medium is enacted into a law, there can be no security for life, liberty, or property; nor, if the laws are not to govern, can any man know how to conduct himself in safety. There never was a law yet made, I conceive, that hit the taste *exactly* of every man, or every part of the community; of course, if this be a reason for opposition, no law can be executed at all without force, and every man or set of men will in that case cut and carve for themselves; the consequences of which must be deprecated by all classes of men, who are friends to order, and to the peace and hapiness of the country. But how can things be otherwise than they are, when clubs

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and societies have been instituted for the express purpose, though clothed in another garb, by their diabolical leader Genet, whose object was to sow sedition, to poison the minds of the people of this country, and to make them discontented with the government of it, who have labored indefatigably to effect these purposes.

On Immigration

To John Adams

SATURDAY, 15 November, 1794.

Dear Sir: The picture drawn in them, of the Genevese, is really interesting and affecting. The proposition of transplanting the members, entire, of the University of that place to America, with the requisition of means to establish the same, and to be accompanied by a considerable emigration is important; requiring more consideration, than, under the circumstances of the moment I am able to bestow on it.

That a National University in *this* country is a thing to be desired, has always been my decided opinion; and the appropriation of ground and funds for it in the Federal City, have long been contemplated and talked of; but how far matured, or how far the transplanting of an *entire* Seminary of *Foreigners*, who may not understand our Language, can be assimilated therein is more than I am prepared to give an opinion upon—or indeed how far funds in either cases are attainable.

My opinion with respect to emigration, is, that except of useful mechanics and some particular descriptions of men or professions, there is no need of encouragement, while the policy or advantage of its taking place in a

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body (I mean the settling of them in a body) may be much questioned; for, by so doing, they retain the Language, habits and principles (good or bad) which they bring with them—Whereas by an intermixture with our people, they, or their descendants, get assimilated to our customs, measures and laws:—in a word, soon become one people.

On the Advantages of the West

To Alexander Spotswood

PHILADELPHIA, 23 November, 1794.

Dear Sir: It has always been my opinion that new Countries (by this I mean the interior of our own) are the best to lay the foundation of wealth, in as much as lands which, comparatively speaking, are to be had there cheap, rise in a fourfold ratio to what they do in the Atlantic Sea—and it is to this circumstance, and the opportunities of acquiring them (by being in the scene) that the advantages consist.—As, until the navigation of the Mississippi can be obtained, or the communication between the Eastern and Western Waters is made more easy, than is the case at present, the principal demand for the product of the land is found in the emigrants who resort to it.—To this cause also, is to be ascribed the rapidly increasing prices of those Lands.

With respect to the other species of property, concerning which you ask my opinion, I shall frankly declare to you that I do not like even to think, much less talk of it. However, as you have put the question, I shall, in a few words, give you my *ideas* of it.—Were it not then, that I am principled against selling negroes, as you would do cattle at a market, I would not in twelve months from

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this date, be possessed of one, as a slave. I shall be happily mistaken, if they are not found to be very troublesome species of property ere many years pass over our heads—(but this bye the bye). For this reason—and because there is but little sale for what is raised in the Western Country, it remains for you to consider whether their value would not be more productive in lands, reserving enough for necessary purposes, there. My love to Mrs. Spotswood and the family. I am etc.

On Love and Marriage

To Eleanor Parke Custis

PHILADELPHIA, 16 January, 1795.

Your letter, the receipt of which I am now acknowledging, is written correctly and in fair characters, which is an evidence that you command, when you please, a fair hand. Possessed of these advantages, it will be your own fault if you do not avail yourself of them, and attention being paid to the choice of your subjects, you can have nothing to fear from the malignancy of criticism, as your ideas are lively, and your descriptions agreeable. Let me touch a little now on your Georgetown ball, and happy, thrice happy, for the fair who were assembled on the occasion, that there was a man to spare; for had there been 79 ladies and only 78 gentlemen, there might, in the course of the evening, have been some disorder among the caps; notwithstanding the apathy which *one* of the company entertains for the "*youth*" of the present day, and her determination "never to give herself a moment's uneasiness on account of any of them." A hint here; men and women feel the same inclinations towards each other *now* that they

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always have done, and which they will continue to do until there is a new order of things, and *you*, as others have done, may find, perhaps, that the passions of your sex are easier raised than allayed. Do not therefore boast too soon or too strongly of your insensibility to, or resistance of, its powers. In the composition of the human frame there is a good deal of inflammable matter, however dormant it may lie for a time, and like an intimate acquaintance of yours, when the torch is put to it, *that* which is *within you* may burst into a blaze; for which reason and especially too, as I have entered upon the chapter of advices, I will read you a lecture drawn from this text.

Love is said to be an involuntary passion, and it is, therefore, contended that it cannot be resisted. This is true in part only, for like all things else, when nourished and supplied plentifully with aliment, it is rapid in its progress; but let these be withdrawn and it may be stifled in its birth or much stunted in its growth. For example, a woman (the same may be said of the other sex) all beautiful and accomplished, will, while her hand and heart are undisposed of, turn the heads and set the circle in which she moves on fire. Let her marry, and what is the consequence? The madness *ceases* and all is quiet again. Why? not because there is any diminution in the charms of the lady, but because there is an end of hope. Hence it follows, that love may and therefore ought to be under guidance of reason, for although we cannot avoid first impressions, we may assuredly place them under guard; and my motives for treating on this subject are to show you, while you remain Eleanor Parke Custis, spinster, and retain the resolution to love with moderation, the propriety of adhering to the latter resolution at least until you have secured your game, and the way by which it may be accomplished.

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When the fire is beginning to kindle, and your heart growing warm, propound these questions to it. Who is this invader? Have I a competent knowledge of him? Is he a man of good character; a man of sense? For, be assured, a sensible woman can never be happy with a fool? What has been his walk in life? Is he a gambler, a spendthrift, or drunkard? Is his fortune sufficient to maintain me in the manner I have been accustomed to live, and my sisters live, and is he one to whom my friends can have no reasonable objection? If these interrogations can be satisfactorily answered, there will remain but one more to be asked, that, however, is an important one. Have I sufficient ground to conclude that his affections are engaged by me? Without this the heart of sensibility will struggle against a passion that is not reciprocated—delicacy, custom, or call it by what epithet you will, having precluded all advances on your part. The declaration, without the *most indirect* invitation of yours, must proceed from the man, to render it permanent and valuable, and nothing short of good sense and an easy unaffected conduct can draw the line between prudery and coquetry. It would be no great departure from truth to say, that it rarely happens otherwise than that a thorough-faced coquette dies in celibacy, as a punishment for her attempts to mislead others, by encouraging looks, words, or actions, given for no other purpose than to draw men on to make overtures that they may be rejected.

This day, according to our information, gives a husband to your elder sister, and consummates, it is to be presumed, her fondest desires. The dawn with us is bright, and propitious, I hope, of her future happiness, for a full measure of which she and Mr. Law have my earnest wishes. Compliments and congratulations on this occasion, and best regards are presented to your mamma, Dr. Stuart

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and family; and every blessing, among which a good husband when you want and deserve one, is bestowed on you by yours, affectionately.

On Indian Policy

To Edmund Pendleton

PHILADELPHIA, 22 January, 1795.

Dear Sir: I accord fully in opinion with yourself, that the plan of annual presents, in an abstract view, unaccompanied with other measures, is not the best mode of treating ignorant savages, from whose hostile conduct we experience much distress; but it is not to be forgotten, that they in turn are not without serious causes of complaint, from the encroachments which are made on their lands by our people, who are not to be restrained by any law now in being, or likely to be enacted. They, poor wretches, have no press through which their grievances are related; and it is well known, that, when one side only of a story is heard and often repeated, the human mind becomes impressed with it insensibly. The annual presents, however, to which you allude, are not given so much with a view to purchase peace, as by way of contribution for injuries not otherwise to be redressed. These people are very much irritated by the continual pressure of land speculators and settlers on one hand, and by the impositions of unauthorized and unprincipled traders, who rob them, in a manner, of their hunting, on the other. Nothing but the strong arm of the Union, or, in other words, adequate laws can correct their abuses. But here jealousies and prejudices, (from which I apprehend more fatal consequences to this government, than from any other source,) aided by

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local situations, and perhaps by interested considerations, always oppose themselves to efficient measures.

My communications to Congress, at the last and present sessions, have proceeded upon ideas similar to those expressed in your letter, namely, to make fair treaties with the savage tribes, (by this I mean, that they shall perfectly understand every article and clause of them, from correct and repeated interpretations;) that these treaties shall be held sacred, and the infractors on either side punished exemplarily; and to furnish them plentifully with goods, under wholesome regulations, without aiming at higher prices than are adequate to cover the cost and charges. If measures like these were adopted, we might hope to live in peace and amity with these borderers; but not whilst our citizens, in violation of law and justice, are guilty of the offences I have mentioned, and are carrying on unauthorized expeditions against them; and when, for the most atrocious murders, even of those of whom we have the least cause of complaint, a jury on the frontiers can hardly be got to listen to a charge, much less to convict a culprit.

On a University at Washington

To the Commissioners of the Federal District

PHILADELPHIA, 28 January, 1795.

Gentlemen: A plan for the establishment of an university in the Federal City has frequently been the subject of conversation; but, in what manner it is proposed to commence this important institution, on how extensive a scale, the means by which it is to be effected, how it is to be supported, or what progress is made in it, are matters altogether unknown to me.

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It has always been a source of serious reflection and sincere regret with me, that the youth of the United States should be sent to foreign countries for the purpose of education. Although there are doubtless many, under these circumstances, who escape the danger of contracting principles unfavorable to republican government, yet we ought to deprecate the hazard attending ardent and susceptible minds, from being too strongly and too early prepossessed in favor of other political systems, before they are capable of appreciating their own.

For this reason I have greatly wished to see a plan adopted, by which the arts, sciences, and belles-lettres could be taught in their *fullest* extent, thereby embracing *all* the advantages of European tuition, with the means of acquiring the liberal knowledge, which is necessary to qualify our citizens for the exigencies of public as well as private life; and (which with me is a consideration of great magnitude) by assembling the youth from the different parts of this rising republic, contributing from their intercourse and interchange of information to the removal of prejudices, which might perhaps sometimes arise from local circumstances.

The Federal City, from its centrality and the advantages, which in other respects it must have over any other place in the United States, ought to be preferred, as a proper site for such an university. And if a plan can be adopted upon a scale as *extensive* as I have described, and the execution of it should commence under favorable auspices in a reasonable time, with a fair prospect of success, I will grant in perpetuity fifty shares in the navigation of Potomac River towards the endowment of it.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

A Letter of Appreciation

To Alexander Hamilton

PHILADELPHIA, 2 February, 1795.

Dear Sir: After so long an experience of your public services, I am naturally led, at this moment of your departure from office (which it has always been my wish to prevent), to review them. In every relation which you have borne to me, I have found that my confidence in your talents, exertions, and integrity has been well placed. I the more freely render this testimony of my approbation, because I speak from opportunities of information, which cannot deceive me, and which furnish satisfactory proof of your title to public regard.

My most earnest wishes for your happiness will attend you in your retirement, and you may assure yourself of the sincere esteem, regard, and friendship of, dear Sir, your affectionate, &c.

Not a Party Man

To Timothy Pickering, Secretary of War

MOUNT VERNON, 27 July, 1795.

Dear Sir: The extract from Mr. Higginson's letter, which you were so obliging as to send to me, places the proceedings of the town of Boston in a different point of view from what might have been entertained from the resolutions, which were sent to me by express, accompanied with a letter from the selectmen of that place. But, much indeed to be regretted, party disputes are now carried to such

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a length, and truth is so enveloped in mist and false representation, that it is extremely difficult to know through what channel to seek it. This difficulty to one, who is of no party, and whose sole wish is to pursue with undeviating steps a path, which would lead this country to respectability, wealth, and happiness, is exceedingly to be lamented. But such, for wise purposes it is presumed, is the turbulence of human passions in party disputes, when victory more than *truth* is the palm contended for, that "the post of honor is a *private station*." With such esteem and regard, I am, &c.

On Guiding Principles

To Henry Knox

MOUNT VERNON, 20 September, 1795.

My dear Sir: Next to a conscientious discharge of my public duties, to carry along with me the approbation of my constituents would be the highest gratification my mind is susceptible of; but, the latter being a secondary, I cannot make the former yield to it, unless some criterion more infallible than partial (if they are not party) meetings can be discovered, as the touchstone of public sentiment. If any power on earth could, or the Great Power above would, erect the standard of infallibility in political opinions, there is no being that inhabits this terrestrial globe, that would resort to it with more eagerness than myself, so long as I remain a servant of the public. But as I have found no better guide hitherto, than upright intentions and close investigation, I shall adhere to those maxims, while I keep the watch; leaving it to those who will come after me to explore new ways, if they like or think them better.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

An Offer of Office

To Patrick Henry

MOUNT VERNON, 9 October, 1795.

Dear Sir: Whatever may be the reception of this letter, truth and candor shall mark its steps. You doubtless know, that the office of State is vacant; and no one can be more sensible, than yourself, of the importance of filling it with a person of abilities, and one in whom the public would have confidence.

It would be uncandid not to inform you, that this office has been offered to others; but it is as true, that it was from conviction in my own mind, that you would not accept it, (until Tuesday last, in a conversation with General, late Governor, Lee, he dropped sentiments which made it less doubtful,) that it was not offered first to you.

I need scarcely add, that if this appointment could be made to comport with your own inclination, it would be as pleasing to me, as I believe it would be acceptable to the public. With this assurance, and with this belief, I make you the offer of it. My first wish is, that you would accept it; the next is, that you would be so good as to give me an answer as soon as you conveniently can, as the public business in that department is now suffering for want of a Secretary.

I persuade myself, Sir, it has not escaped your observation that a crisis is approaching, that must, if it cannot be arrested, soon decide whether order and good government shall be preserved, or anarchy and confusion ensue. I can most religiously aver I have no wish, that is incompatible with the dignity, happiness, and true interest of the people of this country. My ardent desire is, and

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my aim has been, (as far as depended upon the executive department,) to comply strictly with *all* our engagements, foreign and domestic; but to keep the United States free from political connexions with *every* other country, to see them independent of *all* and under the influence of *none*. In a word, I want an *American* character, that the powers of Europe may be convinced we act for *ourselves*, and not for *others*. This, in my judgment, is the only way to be respected abroad and happy at home; and not, by becoming the partisans of Great Britain or France, create dissensions, disturb the public tranquillity, and destroy, perhaps for ever, the cement which binds the union.

On the Opposition to Jay's Treaty

To Edward Carrington

[Private]

PHILADELPHIA, 1 May, 1796.

Dear Sir: It has always been and will continue to be my earnest desire to learn, and, as far as is consistent, to comply with, the public sentiment; but it is on *great* occasions *only*, and after time has been given for cool and deliberate reflection, that the *real* voice of the people can be known.

The present, however, is one of those great occasions, than which none more important has occurred, or probably may occur again to call forth their decision; and to them the appeal is now made. For no candid man in the least degree acquainted with the progress of this business will believe for a moment, that the *ostensible* dispute was about papers, or whether the British treaty was a good one or a bad one, but whether there should be a treaty at all with-

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out the concurrence of the House of Representatives, which was striking at once, and that boldly, too, at the fundamental principles of the constitution; and, if it were established, would render the treaty-making power, not only a nullity, but such an absolute absurdity as to reflect disgrace on the framers of it. For will any one suppose, that they who framed, or those who adopted, that instrument ever intended to give the power to the President and Senate to make treaties, and, declaring that when made and ratified they should be the supreme law of the land, would in the same breath place it in the powers of the House of Representatives to fix their vote on them; unless apparent marks of fraud or corruption (which in equity would set aside any contract) accompanied the measure, or striking evidence of national injury attended their adoption, as to make a war or any other evil preferable? Every unbiassed mind will answer in the negative.

Whence the source and what the object of all this struggle is, I submit to my fellow-citizens. Charity would lead one to hope, that the motives to it have been pure. Suspicions, however, speak different language, and my tongue for the present shall be silent. Such further information on this head, or any other similar important, which may come to your knowledge, and which your leisure and inclination may enable you to give, will be very acceptable to, dear Sir, yours, &c.

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On His Confidence in the People

To John Jay, Governor of New York

PHILADELPHIA, 8 May, 1796.

Sir: I am sure the mass of citizens in these United States *mean well*, and I firmly believe they will always *act well* whenever they can obtain a right understanding of matters; but in some parts of the Union, where the sentiments of their delegates and leaders are adverse to the government, and great pains are taken to inculcate a belief, that their rights are assailed and their liberties endangered, it is not easy to accomplish this; especially, as is the case invariably, when the inventors and abettors of pernicious measures use infinite more industry in disseminating the poison, than the well disposed part of the community to furnish the antidote. To this source all our discontents may be traced, and from it all our embarrassments proceed. Hence serious misfortunes, originating in misrepresentation, frequently flow, and spread, before they can be dissipated by truth.

These things do, as you have supposed, fill my mind with much concern and with serious anxiety. Indeed, the trouble and perplexities which they occasion, added to the weight of years, which have passed over me, have worn away my mind more than my body, and render ease and retirement indispensably necessary to both, during the short time I have to stay here. It would be uncandid, therefore, and would discover a want of friendship and confidence, (as you have expressed a solicitude for my at least riding out the storm,) not to add, that nothing short of events, or such imperious circumstances, (as I hope and trust will not happen,) and might render a retreat dishonorable, will pre-

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vent the public annunciation of it in time to obviate a misapplication of votes at the election of President and Vice-President of the United States in December next, upon myself.

On Partisan Opposition

To Thomas Jefferson

MOUNT VERNON, 6 July, 1796.

Dear Sir: If I had entertained any suspicions before, that the queries, which have been published in Bache's paper, proceeded from you, the assurances you have given of the contrary would have removed them; but the truth is, I harbored none. I am at no loss to *conjecture* from what source they flowed, through what channel they were conveyed, and for what purpose they and similar publications appear. They were known to be in the hands of Mr. Parker in the early part of the last session of Congress. They were shown about by Mr. Giles during the session, and they made their public exhibition about the close of it.

Perceiving and probably hearing, that no abuse in the gazettes would induce me to take notice of anonymous publications against me, those, who were disposed to do me *such friendly offices*, have embraced without restraint every opportunity to weaken the confidence of the people; and, by having the *whole* game in their hands, they have scrupled not to publish things that do not, as well as those which do exist, and to mutilate the latter, so as to make them subserve the purposes which they have in view.

As you have mentioned the subject yourself, it would not be frank, candid, or friendly to conceal that your conduct has been represented as derogating from that opinion

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I had conceived you entertained of me: that, to your particular friends and connexions you have described and they have denounced, me as a person under a dangerous influence, and that, if I would listen *more* to some *other* opinions, all would be well. My answer invariably has been, that I had never discovered any thing in the conduct of Mr. Jefferson to raise suspicions in my mind of his insincerity; that, if he would retrace my public conduct while he was in the administration, abundant proofs would occur to him, that truth and right decisions were the *sole* objects of my pursuit; that there were as many instances within his *own* knowledge of my having decided *against* as *in favor* of the opinions of the person evidently alluded to; and, moreover, that I was no believer in the infallibility of the politics or measures of *any man living*. In short, that I was no party man myself, and the first wish of my heart was, if parties did exist, to reconcile them.

To this I may add, and very truly, that, until within the last year or two, I had no conception that parties would or even could go the length I have been witness to; nor did I believe until lately, that it was within the bounds of probability, hardly within those of possibility, that, while I was using my utmost exertions to establish a national character of our own, independent, as far as our obligations and justice would permit, of every nation of the earth, and wished, by steering a steady course, to preserve this country from the horrors of a desolating war, I should be accused of being the enemy of one nation, and subject to the influence of another; and, to prove it, that every act of my administration would be tortured, and the grossest and most insidious misrepresentations of them be made, by giving one side *only* of a subject, and that too in such exaggerated and indecent terms as could scarcely be applied to a Nero, a notorious defaulter, or even to a common pick-

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pocket. But enough of this, I have already gone further in the expression of my feelings than I intended.

On a National University

To Alexander Hamilton

[Private]

PHILADELPHIA, 1 September, 1796.

My dear Sir: About the middle of last week I wrote to you; and that it might escape the eye of the inquisitive (for some of my letters have lately been pried into), I took the liberty of putting it under a cover to Mr. Jay.

Since then, revolving on the paper that was inclosed therein, on the various matters it contained, and on the first expression of the advice or recommendation which was given in it, I have regretted that another subject (which in my estimation is of interesting concern to the well-being of this country) was not touched upon also;—I mean education generally, as one of the surest means of enlightening and giving just ways of thinking to our citizens, but particularly the establishment of a university; where the youth from all parts of the United States might receive the polish of erudition in the arts, sciences, and belles-lettres; and where those who were disposed to run a political course might not only be instructed in the theory and principles, but (this seminary being at the seat of the general government) where the legislature would be in session half the year, and the interests and politics of the nation of course would be discussed, they would lay the surest foundation for the practical part also.

But that which would render it of the highest importance, in my opinion, is, that the juvenal period of life, when

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friendships are formed, and habits established, that will stick by one; the youth or young men from different parts of the United States would be assembled together, and would by degrees discover that there was not that cause for those jealousies and prejudices which one part of the Union had imbibed against another part:—of course, sentiments of more liberality in the general policy of the country would result from it. What but the mixing of people from different parts of the United States during the war rubbed off these impressions? A century in the ordinary intercourse, would not have accomplished what the seven years' association in arms did; but that ceasing, prejudices are beginning to revive again, and never will be eradicated so effectually by any other means as the intimate intercourse of characters in early life,—who, in all probability, will be at the head of the counsels of this country in a more advanced stage of it.

Farewell Address

To the People of the United States

17 September, 1796

Friends, and Fellow-Citizens: The period for a new election of a Citizen, to administer the Executive Government of the United States, being not far distant, and the time actually arrived, when your thoughts must be employed in designating the person, who is to be clothed with that important trust, it appears to me proper, especially as it may conduce to a more distinct expression of the public voice, that I should now apprise you of the resolution I have formed, to decline being considered among the number of those, out of whom a choice is to be made.

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I beg you, at the same time, to do me the justice to be assured, that this resolution has not been taken, without a strict regard to all the considerations appertaining to the relation, which binds a dutiful citizen to his country—and that, in withdrawing the tender of service which silence in my situation might imply, I am influenced by no diminution of zeal for your future interest, no deficiency of grateful respect for your past kindness; but am supported by a full conviction that the step is compatible with both.

The acceptance of, and continuance hitherto in, the office to which your suffrages have twice called me, have been a uniform sacrifice of inclination to the opinion of duty, and to a deference for what appeared to be your desire.—I constantly hoped, that it would have been much earlier in my power, consistently with motives, which I was not at liberty to disregard, to return to that retirement, from which I had been reluctantly drawn.—The strength of my inclination to do this, previous to the last election, had even led to the preparation of an address to declare it to you; but mature reflection on the then perplexed and critical posture of our affairs with foreign Nations, and the unanimous advice of persons entitled to my confidence, impelled me to abandon the idea.—

I rejoice that the state of your concerns, external as well as internal, no longer renders the pursuit of inclination incompatible with the sentiment of duty, or propriety; and am persuaded, whatever partiality may be retained for my services, that in the present circumstances of our country, you will not disapprove my determination to retire.

The impressions, with which I first undertook the arduous trust, were explained on the proper occasion.—In the discharge of this trust, I will only say, that I have, with good intentions, contributed towards the organization and

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administration of the government, the best exertions of which a very fallible judgment was capable.—Not unconscious, in the outset, of the inferiority of my qualifications, experience in my own eyes, perhaps still more in the eyes of others, has strengthened the motives to diffidence of myself; and every day the increasing weight of years admonishes me more and more, that the shade of retirement is as necessary to me as it will be welcome.—Satisfied, that, if any circumstances have given peculiar value to my services, they were temporary, I have the consolation to believe, that, while choice and prudence invite me to quit the political scene, patriotism does not forbid it.

In looking forward to the moment, which is intended to terminate the career of my public life, my feelings do not permit me to suspend the deep acknowledgment of that debt of gratitude, which I owe to my beloved country,—for the many honors it has conferred upon me; still more for the steadfast confidence with which it has supported me; and for the opportunities I have thence enjoyed of manifesting my inviolable attachment, by services faithful and persevering, though in usefulness unequal to my zeal.—If benefits have resulted to our country from these services, let it always be remembered to your praise, and as an instructive example in our annals, that under circumstances in which the Passions agitated in every direction were liable to mislead, amidst appearances sometimes dubious, vicissitudes of fortune often discouraging, in situations in which not unfrequently want of success has countenanced the spirit of criticism, the constancy of your support was the essential prop of the efforts, and a guarantee of the plans by which they were effected.—Profoundly penetrated with this idea, I shall carry it with me to the grave, as a strong incitement to unceasing vows that Heaven may continue to you the choicest tokens of its beneficence—that your union and

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brotherly affection may be perpetual—that the free constitution which is the work of your hands, may be sacredly maintained—that its administration in every department may be stamped with wisdom and virtue—that, in fine, the happiness of the people of these States, under the auspices of liberty, may be made complete, by so careful a preservation and so prudent a use of this blessing as will acquire to them glory of recommending it to the applause, the affection, and adoption of every nation, which is yet a stranger to it.

Here, perhaps, I ought to stop.—But a solicitude for your welfare, which cannot end but with my life, and the apprehension of danger, natural to that solicitude, urge me on an occasion like the present, to offer to your solemn contemplation, and to recommend to your frequent review, some sentiments; which are the result of much reflection, of no inconsiderable observation and which appear to me all important to the permanency of your felicity as a People.—These will be offered to you with the more freedom, as you can only see in them the disinterested warnings of a parting friend, who can possibly have no personal motive to bias his counsels.—Nor can I forget, as an encouragement to it your indulgent reception of my sentiments on a former and not dissimilar occasion.

Interwoven as is the love of liberty with every ligament of your hearts, no recommendation of mine is necessary to fortify or confirm the attachment.—

The Unity of Government which constitutes you one people, is also now dear to you.—It is justly so;—for it is a main Pillar in the Edifice of your real independence; the support of your tranquility at home; your peace abroad; of your safety: of your prosperity in every shape; of that very Liberty, which you so highly prize.—But as it is easy to foresee, that, from different causes, and from

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different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth;—as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment, that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national Union to your collective and individual happiness;—that you should cherish a cordial, habitual, and immovable attachment, to it: accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the Palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned, and indignantly frowning upon the first dawning of every attempt to alienate any portion of our Country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest.—Citizens by birth or choice of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections.—The name of AMERICAN, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations.—With slight shades of difference, you have the same Religion, Manners, Habits, and political Principles.—You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together. The independence and Liberty you possess are the work of joint councils, and joint efforts—of common dangers, sufferings and successes.—

But these considerations, however powerfully they address themselves to your sensibility, are greatly outweighed by those, which apply more immediately to your Interest.—Here every portion of our country finds the most com

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manding motives for carefully guarding and preserving the Union of the whole.

The *North* in an unrestrained intercourse with the *South*, protected by the equal Laws of a common government, finds in the productions of the latter great additional resources of maritime and commercial enterprise—and precious materials of manufacturing industry.—The *South* in the same intercourse, benefiting by the agency of the *North*, sees its agriculture grow and its commerce expand. Turning partly into its own channels the seamen of the *North*, it finds its particular navigation invigorated;—and, while it contributes, in different ways, to nourish and increase the general mass of the national navigation, it looks forward to the protection of a maritime strength to which itself is unequally adapted.—The *East*, in a like intercourse with the *West*, already finds, and in the progressive improvement of interior communications, by land and water, will more and more find, a valuable vent for the commodities which it brings from abroad, or manufactures at home.—The *West* derives from the *East* supplies requisite to its growth and comfort,—and what is perhaps of still greater consequence, it must of necessity owe the *secure* enjoyment of indispensable *outlets* for its own productions to the weight, influence, and the future maritime strength of the Atlantic side of the Union, directed by an indissoluble community of interest, as *one Nation*. Any other tenure by which the *West* can hold this essential advantage, whether derived from its own separate strength, or from an apostate and unnatural connexion with any foreign Power, must be intrinsically precarious.

While then every part of our Country thus feels an immediate and particular interest in Union, all the parts combined in the united mass of means and efforts cannot fail to find greater strength, greater resource, proportion-

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ably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their Peace by foreign Nations; and, what is of inestimable value! they must derive from Union an exemption from those broils and wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighboring countries, not tied together by the same government; which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce; but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments, and intrigues would stimulate and embitter.—Hence likewise they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown Military establishments, which under any form of government, are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to Republican Liberty: In this sense it is, that your Union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

These considerations speak a persuasive language to every reflecting and virtuous mind,—and exhibit the continuance of the UNION as a primary object of Patriotic desire.—Is there a doubt, whether a common government can embrace so large a sphere?—Let experience solve it.—To listen to mere speculation in such a case were criminal.—We are authorized to hope that a proper organization of the whole, with the auxiliary agency of governments for the respective subdivisions, will afford a happy issue to the experiment. 'Tis well worth a fair and full experiment. With such powerful and obvious motives to Union, affecting all parts of our country, while experience shall not have demonstrated its impracticability, there will always be reason to distrust the patriotism of those, who in any quarter may endeavor to weaken its bands.—

In contemplating the causes which may disturb our Union, it occurs as matter of serious concern, that any ground should have been furnished for characterizing

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parties by *Geographical* discriminations—*Northern* and *Southern*—*Atlantic* and *Western*; whence designing men may endeavor to excite a belief, that there is a real difference of local interests and views. One of the expedients of Party to acquire influence, within particular districts, is to misrepresent the opinions and aims of other districts.—You cannot shield yourselves too much against the jealousies and heart burnings which spring from these misrepresentations;—They tend to render alien to each other those who ought to be bound together by fraternal affection.—The inhabitants of our Western country have lately had a useful lesson on this head.—They have seen, in the negotiation by the Executive, and in the unanimous ratification by the Senate, of the treaty with Spain, and in the universal satisfaction at that event, throughout the United States, a decisive proof how unfounded were the suspicions propagated among them of a policy in the General Government and in the Atlantic States unfriendly to their interests in regard to the MISSISSIPPI.—They have been witnesses to the formation of two Treaties, that with G. Britain, and that with Spain, which secure to them every thing they could desire, in respect to our Foreign Relations, towards confirming their prosperity.—Will it not be their wisdom to rely for the preservation of these advantages on the UNION by which they were procured?—Will they not henceforth be deaf to those advisers, if such there are, who would sever them from their Brethren, and connect them with Aliens?—

To the efficacy and permanency of your Union, a Government for the whole is indispensable.—No alliances however strict between the parts can be an adequate substitute.—They must inevitably experience the infractions and interruptions which all alliances in all times have experienced.—Sensible of this momentous truth, you have im-

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proved upon your first essay, by the adoption of a Constitution of Government, better calculated than your former for an intimate Union, and for the efficacious management of your common concerns.—This government, the offspring of our own choice uninfluenced and unawed, adopted upon full investigation and mature deliberation, completely free in its principles, in the distribution of its powers, uniting security with energy, and containing within itself a provision for its own amendment, has a just claim to your confidence and your support.—Respect for its authority, compliance with its Laws, acquiescence in its measures, are duties enjoined by the fundamental maxims of true Liberty.—The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government.—But the Constitution which at any time exists, 'till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole People, is sacredly obligatory upon all.—The very idea of the power and the right of the People to establish Government, presupposes the duty of every individual to obey the established Government.

All obstructions to the execution of the Laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, controul, counteract, or awe the regular deliberation and action of the constituted authorities, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency.—They serve to organize faction, to give it an artificial and extraordinary force—to put in the place of the delegated will of the Nation, the will of a party;—often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community;—and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction, rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans digested by common

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councils, and modified by mutual interests.—However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely, in the course of time and things, to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men will be enabled to subvert the Power of the People and to usurp for themselves the reins of Government; destroying afterwards the very engines, which have lifted them to unjust dominion.—

Towards the preservation of your Government and the permanency of your present happy state, it is requisite, not only that you steadily discountenance irregular oppositions to its acknowledged authority, but also that you resist with care the spirit of innovation upon its principles, however specious the pretexts.—One method of assault may be to effect, in the forms of the Constitution, alterations which will impair the energy of the system, and thus to undermine what cannot be directly overthrown.—In all the changes to which you may be invited, remember that time and habit are at least as necessary to fix the true character of Governments, as of other human institutions—that experience is the surest standard, by which to test the real tendency of the existing Constitution of a Country—that facility in changes upon the credit of mere hypothesis and opinion exposes to perpetual change, from the endless variety of hypothesis and opinion:—and remember, especially, that, for the efficient management of your common interests, in a country so extensive as ours, a Government of as much vigor as is consistent with the perfect security of Liberty is indispensable.—Liberty itself will find in such a Government, with powers properly distributed and adjusted, its surest Guardian.—It is, indeed, little else than a name, where the Government is too feeble to withstand the enterprises of faction, to confine each member of the society within the limits prescribed by the

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laws, and to maintain all in the secure and tranquil enjoyment of the rights of person and property.

I have already intimated to you the danger of Parties in the State, with particular reference to the founding of them on Geographical discriminations.—Let me now take a more comprehensive view, and warn you in the most solemn manner against the baneful effects of the Spirit of Party, generally.

This Spirit, unfortunately, is inseparable from our nature, having its root in the strongest passions of the human mind.—It exists under different shapes in all Governments, more or less stifled, controuled, or repressed; but, in those of the popular form, it is seen in its greatest rankness, and is truly their worst enemy.—

The alternate domination of one faction over another, sharpened by the spirit of revenge natural to party disension, which in different ages and countries has perpetrated the most horrid enormities, is itself a frightful despotism.—But this leads at length to a more formal and permanent despotism.—The disorders and miseries, which result, gradually incline the minds of men to seek security and repose in the absolute power of an Individual: and sooner or later the chief of some prevailing faction more able or more fortunate than his competitors, turns this disposition to the purpose of his own elevation, on the ruins of Public Liberty.

Without looking forward to an extremity of this kind, (which nevertheless ought to be entirely out of sight), the common and continual mischiefs of the spirit of Party are sufficient to make it the interest and duty of a wise People to discourage and restrain it.—

It serves always to distract the Public Councils, and enfeeble the Public administration.—It agitates the community with ill founded jealousies and false alarms, kindles

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the animosity of one part against another, foment occasionally riot and insurrection.—It opens the doors to foreign influence and corruption, which find a facilitated access to the Government itself through the channels of party passions. Thus policy and the will of one country, are subjected to the policy and will of another.

There is an opinion that parties in free countries are useful checks upon the Administration of the Government, and serve to keep alive the Spirit of Liberty.—This within certain limits is probably true—and in Governments of a Monarchical cast, Patriotism may look with indulgence, if not with favour, upon the spirit of party.—But in those of the popular character, in Governments purely elective, it is a spirit not to be encouraged.—From their natural tendency, it is certain there will always be enough of that spirit for every salutary purpose,—and there being constant danger of excess, the effort ought to be, by force of public opinion, to mitigate and assuage it.—A fire not to be quenched; it demands a uniform vigilance to prevent its bursting into a flame, lest instead of warming, it should consume.

It is important, likewise, that the habits of thinking in a free country should inspire caution in those entrusted with its administration, to confine themselves within their respective constitutional spheres; avoiding in the exercise of the powers of one department to encroach upon another.—The spirit of encroachment tends to consolidate the powers of all the departments in one, and thus to create, whatever the form of government, a real despotism.—A just estimate of that love of power, and proneness to abuse it, which predominates in the human heart, is sufficient to satisfy us of the truth of this position.—The necessity of reciprocal checks in the exercise of political power, by dividing and distributing it into different depositories, and

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constituting each the Guardian of the Public Weal against invasions by the others, had been evinced by experiments ancient and modern; some of them in our country and under our own eyes.—To preserve them must be as necessary as to institute them. If in the opinion of the People, the distribution or modification of the Constitutional powers be in any particular wrong, let it be corrected by an amendment in the way which the Constitution designates.—But let there be no change by usurpation; for though this, in one instance, may be the instrument of good, it is the customary weapon by which free governments are destroyed.—The precedent must always greatly overbalance in permanent evil any partial or transient benefit which the use can at any time yield.—

Of all the dispositions and habits, which lead to political prosperity, Religion and morality are indispensable supports.—In vain would that man claim the tribute of Patriotism, who should labour to subvert these great Pillars of human happiness, these firmest props of the duties of Men and Citizens.—The mere Politician, equally with the pious man, ought to respect and to cherish them.—A volume could not trace all their connexions with private and public felicity.—Let it simply be asked where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation *desert* the oaths, which are the instruments of investigation in Courts of Justice? And let us with caution indulge the supposition, that morality can be maintained without religion.—Whatever may be conceded to the influence of refined education on minds of peculiar structure—reason and experience both forbid us to expect, that national morality can prevail in exclusion of religious principle.—

'T is substantially true, that virtue or morality is a necessary spring of popular government.—The rule indeed ex-

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tends with more or less force to every species of Free Government.—Who that is a sincere friend to it can look with indifference upon attempts to shake the foundation of the fabric?—

Promote, then, as an object of primary importance, institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.—

As a very important source of strength and security, cherish public credit.—One method of preserving it is, to use it as sparingly as possible:—avoiding occasions of expense by cultivating peace, but remembering also that timely disbursements to prepare for danger frequently prevent much greater disbursements to repel it—avoiding likewise the accumulation of debt, not only by shunning occasions of expense, but by vigorous exertions in time of Peace to discharge the debts which unavoidable wars may have occasioned, not ungenerously throwing upon posterity the burthen which we ourselves ought to bear. The execution of these maxims belongs to your Representatives, but it is necessary that public opinions should coöperate.—To facilitate to them the performance of their duty, it is essential that you should practically bear in mind, that towards the payment of debts there must be Revenue—that to have Revenue there must be taxes—that no taxes can be devised which are not more or less inconvenient and unpleasant—that the intrinsic embarrassment inseparable from the selection of the proper objects (which is always a choice of difficulties) ought to be a decisive motive for a candid construction of the conduct of the Government in making it, and for a spirit of acquiescence in the measures for obtaining Revenue which the public exigencies may at any time dictate.—

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Observe good faith and justice towards all Nations. Cultivate peace and harmony with all.—Religion and Morality enjoin this conduct; and can it be that good policy does not equally enjoin it?—It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous and too novel example of a People always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence.—Who can doubt that in the course of time and things, the fruits of such a plan would richly repay any temporary advantages, which might be lost by a steady adherence to it? Can it be that Providence has not connected the permanent felicity of a Nation with its virtue? The experiment, at least, is recommended by every sentiment which ennobles human nature.—Alas! is it rendered impossible by its vices?

In the execution of such a plan nothing is more essential than that permanent, inveterate antipathies against particular nations and passionate attachments for others should be excluded; and that in place of them just and amicable feelings towards all should be cultivated.—The Nation, which indulges towards another an habitual hatred or an habitual fondness, is in some degree a slave. It is a slave to its animosity or to its affection, either of which is sufficient to lead it astray from its duty and its interest.—Antipathy in one nation against another, disposes each more readily to offer insult and injury, to lay hold of slight causes of umbrage, and to be haughty and intractable, when accidental or trifling occasions of dispute occur.—Hence frequent collisions, obstinate, envenomed and bloody contests.—The Nation prompted by ill-will and resentment sometimes impels to War the Government, contrary to the best calculations of policy.—The Government sometimes participates in the national propensity, and adopts through passion what reason would reject;—at other times, it makes

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the animosity of the Nation subservient to projects of hostility instigated by pride, ambition, and other sinister and pernicious motives.—The peace often, sometimes perhaps the Liberty, of Nations has been the victim.—

So likewise a passionate attachment of one Nation for another produces a variety of evils.—Sympathy for the favourite nation, facilitating the illusion of an imaginary common interest in cases where no real common interest exists, and infusing into one the enmities of the other, betrays the former into a participation in the quarrels and wars of the latter, without adequate inducement or justification: It leads also to concessions to the favourite Nation of privileges denied to others, which is apt doubly to injure the Nation making the concessions; by unnecessarily parting with what ought to have been retained, and by exciting jealousy, ill-will, and a disposition to retaliate, in the parties from whom equal privileges are withheld; and it gives to ambitious, corrupted, or deluded citizens, (who devote themselves to the favourite Nation) facility to betray, or sacrifice the interests of their own country, without odium, sometimes even with popularity:—gilding with appearances of a virtuous sense of obligation, a commendable deference for public opinion, or a laudable zeal for public good, the base or foolish compliances of ambition, corruption or infatuation.—

As avenues to foreign influence in innumerable ways, such attachments are particularly alarming to the truly enlightened and independent Patriot.—How many opportunities do they afford to tamper with domestic factions, to practise the arts of seduction, to mislead public opinion, to influence or awe the public councils! Such an attachment of a small or weak, towards a great and powerful nation, dooms the former to be the satellite of the latter.

Against the insidious wiles of foreign influence, I conjure

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you to believe me, fellow-citizens, the jealousy of a free people ought to be *constantly* awake, since history and experience prove that foreign influence is one of the most baneful foes of republican Government.—But that jealousy, to be useful, must be impartial; else it becomes the instrument of the very influence to be avoided, instead of a defence against it.—Excessive partiality for one foreign nation and excessive dislike of another, cause those whom they actuate to see danger only on one side, and serve to veil and even second the arts of influence on the other.—Real Patriots, who may resist the intrigues of the favourite, are liable to become suspected and odious; while its tools and dupes usurp the applause and confidence of the people, to surrender their interests.—

The great rule of conduct for us, in regard to foreign Nations, is, in extending our commercial relations, to have with them as little *Political* connection as possible.—So far as we have already formed engagements, let them be fulfilled with perfect good faith.—Here let us stop.—

Europe has a set of primary interests, which to us have none, or a very remote relation.—Hence she must be engaged in frequent controversies, the causes of which are essentially foreign to our concerns.—Hence therefore it must be unwise in us to implicate ourselves, by artificial ties in the ordinary vicissitudes of her politics, or the ordinary combinations and collisions of her friendships, or enmities.

Our detached and distant situation invites and enables us to pursue a different course.—If we remain one People, under an efficient government, the period is not far off, when we may defy material injury from external annoyance; when we may take such an attitude as will cause the neutrality we may at any time resolve upon to be scrupulously respected. When belligerent nations, under the im-

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possibility of making acquisitions upon us, will not lightly hazard the giving us provocation when we may choose peace or war, as our interest guided by our justice shall counsel.

Why forego the advantages of so peculiar a situation?—Why quit our own to stand upon foreign ground?—Why, by interweaving our destiny with that of any part of Europe, entangle our peace and prosperity in the toils of European ambition, rivalry, interest, humour, or caprice?—

'T is our true policy to steer clear of permanent alliances, with any portion of the foreign world;—so far, I mean, as we are now at liberty to do it—for let me not be understood as capable of patronizing infidelity to existing engagements, (I hold the maxim no less applicable to public than to private affairs, that honesty is always the best policy).—I repeat it therefore let those engagements be observed in their genuine sense.—But in my opinion it is unnecessary and would be unwise to extend them.—

Taking care always to keep ourselves, by suitable establishments, on a respectably defensive posture, we may safely trust to temporary alliances for extraordinary emergencies.—

Harmony, liberal intercourse with all nations, are recommended by policy, humanity, and interest. But even our commercial policy should hold an equal and impartial hand:—neither seeking nor granting exclusive favours or preferences;—consulting the natural course of things;—diffusing and diversifying by gentle means the streams of commerce, but forcing nothing;—establishing with Powers so disposed—in order to give trade a stable course, to define the rights of our Merchants, and to enable the Government to support them—conventional rules of intercourse, the best that present circumstances and mutual

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opinion will permit; but temporary, and liable to be from time to time abandoned or varied, as experience and circumstances shall dictate; constantly keeping in view that 't is folly in one nation to look for disinterested favors from another,—that it must pay with a portion of its independence for whatever it may accept under that character—that by such acceptance, it may place itself in the condition of having given equivalents for nominal favours and yet of being reproached with ingratitude for not giving more.—There can be no greater error than to expect or calculate upon real favours from Nation to Nation.—'T is an allusion which experience must cure, which a just pride ought to discard.

In offering to you, my Countrymen, these counsels of an old and affectionate friend, I dare not hope they will make the strong and lasting impression, I could wish,—that they will controul the usual current of the passions, or prevent our Nation from running the course which has hitherto marked the destiny of Nations.—But if I may even flatter myself, that they may be productive of some partial benefit; some occasional good; that they may now and then recur to moderate the fury of party spirit, to warn against the mischiefs of foreign intrigue, to guard against the impostures of pretended patriotism, this hope will be a full recompense for the solicitude for your welfare, by which they have been dictated.—

How far in the discharge of my official duties, I have been guided by the principles which have been delineated, the public Records and other evidences of my conduct must witness to You, and to the world.—To myself the assurance of my own conscience is, that I have at least believed myself to be guided by them.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

A Letter of Advice

To George Washington Parke Custis

PHILADELPHIA, 28 November, 1796.

Dear Washington: In a few hasty lines, covering your sister's letter and a comb, on Saturday last, I promised to write more fully to you by the post of this day. I am now in the act of performing that promise.

The assurances you give me of applying diligently to your studies, and fulfilling those obligations which are enjoined by your Creator and due to his creatures, are highly pleasing and satisfactory to me. I rejoice in it on two accounts; first, as it is the sure means of laying the foundation of your own happiness, and rendering you, if it should please God to spare your life, a useful member of society hereafter; and secondly, that I may, if I live to enjoy the pleasure, reflect that I have been, in some degree, instrumental in effecting these purposes.

You are now extending into that stage of life when good or bad habits are formed. When the mind will be turned to things useful and praiseworthy, or to dissipation and vice. Fix on whichever it may, it will stick by you; for you know it has been said, and truly, "that as the twig is bent so it will grow." This, in a strong point of view, shows the propriety of letting your inexperience be directed by maturer advice, and in placing guard upon the avenues which lead to idleness and vice. The latter will approach like a thief, working upon your passions; encouraged, perhaps, by bad examples; the propensity to which will increase in proportion to the practice of it and your yielding. This admonition proceeds from the purest affection for you; but I do not mean by it, that you are

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to become a stoic, or to deprive yourself in the intervals of study of any recreations or manly exercise which reason approves.

'T is well to be on good terms with all your fellow-students, and I am pleased to hear you are so, but while a courteous behavior is due to all, select the most deserving only for your friendships, and before this becomes intimate, weigh their dispositions and character *well*. True friendship is a plant of slow growth; to be sincere, there must be a congeniality of temper and pursuits. Virtue and vice can not be allied; nor can idleness and industry; of course, if you resolve to adhere to the two former of these extremes, an intimacy with those who incline to the latter of them, would be extremely embarrassing to you; it would be a stumbling block in your way; and act like a millstone hung to your neck, for it is the nature of idleness and vice to obtain as many votaries as they can.

I would guard you, too, against imbibing hasty and unfavorable impressions of any one. Let your judgment always balance well before you decide; and even then, where there is no occasion for expressing an opinion, it is best to be silent, for there is nothing more certain than that it is at all times more easy to make enemies than friends. And besides, to speak evil of any one, unless there is unequivocal proofs of their deserving it, is an injury for which there is no adequate reparation. For, as Shakespeare says "He that robs me of my good name enriches not himself, but renders me poor indeed," or words to that effect. Keep in mind that scarcely any change would be agreeable to you at first from the sudden transition, and from never having been accustomed to shift or rough it. And, moreover, that if you meet with collegiate fare, it will be unmanly to complain. My pen reminds me it is time to conclude. Affectionately, &c.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

P. S. I presume you received my letter covering a ten dollar bill to pay for your gown, although it is not mentioned. To acknowledge the receipt of letters is always proper, to remove doubts of their miscarriage.

Message to Congress

Speech to Both Houses of Congress

7 December, 1796

Fellow-Citizens of the Senate and House of Representatives: To an active external commerce, the protection of a naval force is indispensable. This is manifest with regard to wars, in which a state itself is a party. But, besides this, it is in our own experience, that the most sincere neutrality is not a sufficient guard against the depredations of nations at war. To secure respect to a neutral flag, requires a naval force, organized and ready to vindicate it from insult or aggression. This may even prevent the necessity of going to war, by discouraging belligerent powers from committing such violations of the rights of the neutral party, as may, first or last, leave no other option. From the best information I have been able to obtain, it would seem as if our trade to the Mediterranean, without a protecting force, will always be insecure, and our citizens exposed to the calamity from which numbers of them have but just been relieved.

These considerations invite the United States to look to the means, and to set about the gradual creation of a navy. The increasing progress of their navigation promises them, at no distant period, the requisite supply of seamen; and their means, in other respects, favor the undertaking. It is an encouragement, likewise, that their par-

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ticular situation will give weight and influence to a moderate naval force in their hands. Will it not then be advisable to begin, without delay, to provide and lay up the materials for the building and equipping of ships of war; and to proceed in the work by degrees, in proportion as our resources shall render it practicable without inconvenience; so that a future war of Europe may not find our commerce in the same unprotected state in which it was found by the present.

Congress have repeatedly, and not without success, directed their attention to the encouragement of manufacturers. The object is of too much consequence not to insure a continuance of their efforts in every way which shall appear eligible. As a general rule, manufactures on public accounts are inexpedient. But, where the state of things in a country leaves little hope, that certain branches of manufacture will, for a great length of time, obtain; when these are of a nature essential to the furnishing and equipping of the public force in time of war; are not establishments for procuring them on public account, to the extent of the ordinary demand for the public service, recommended by strong considerations of national policy, as an exception to the general rule? Ought our country to remain in such cases dependent on foreign supply, precarious, because liable to be interrupted? If the necessary articles should, in this mode, cost more in time of peace, will not the security and independence, thence arising, form an ample compensation? Establishments of this sort, commensurate only with the calls of the public service in time of peace, will, in time of war, easily be extended in proportion to the exigencies of the government; and may even, perhaps, be made to yield a surplus for the supply of our citizens at large, so as to mitigate the privations from the interruption of their trade. If adopted, the

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plan ought to exclude all those branches which are already, or likely soon to be, established in the country, in order that there may be no danger of interference with pursuits of individual industry.

It will not be doubted, that, with reference either to individual or national welfare, agriculture is of primary importance. In proportion as nations advance in population and other circumstances of maturity, this truth becomes more apparent, and renders the cultivation of the soil more and more an object of public patronage. Institutions for promoting it grow up, supported by the public purse; and to what object can it be dedicated with greater propriety? Among the means, which have been employed to this end, none have been attended with greater success than the establishment of boards, composed of proper characters, charged with collecting and diffusing information, and enabled by premiums, and small pecuniary aids, to encourage and assist a spirit of discovery and improvement. This species of establishment contributes doubly to the increase of improvement, by stimulating to enterprise and experiment, and by drawing to a common centre the results everywhere of individual skill and observation, and spreading them thence over the whole nation. Experience accordingly has shown, that they are very cheap instruments of immense national benefits.

I have heretofore proposed to the consideration of Congress, the expediency of establishing a national university, and also a military academy. The desirableness of both these institutions has so constantly increased with every new view I have taken of the subject, that I cannot omit the opportunity of once for all recalling your attention to them.

The assembly to which I address myself, is too enlightened not to be fully sensible how much a flourishing state

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of the arts and sciences contributes to national prosperity and reputation. True it is, that our country, much to its honor, contains many seminaries of learning highly respectable and useful; but the funds upon which they rest are too narrow to command the ablest professors, in the different departments of liberal knowledge, for the institution contemplated, though they would be excellent auxiliaries.

Amongst the motives to such an institution, the assimilation of the principles, opinions, and manners of our countrymen, by the common education of a portion of our youth from every quarter, well deserves attention. The more homogeneous our citizens can be made in these particulars, the greater will be our prospect of permanent union; and the primary object of such a national institution should be, the education of our youth in the science of government. In a republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important, and what duty more pressing on its legislature, than to patronize a plan for communicating it to those, who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the country?

The institution of a military academy is also recommended by cogent reasons. However pacific the general policy of a nation may be, it ought never to be without an adequate stock of military knowledge for emergencies. The first would impair the energy of its character, and both would hazard its safety, or expose it to greater evils when war could not be avoided. Besides that war might often not depend upon its own choice. In proportion as the observance of pacific maxims might exempt a nation from the necessity of practising the rules of the military art, ought to be its care in preserving and transmitting, by proper establishments, the knowledge of that art. Whatever argument may be drawn from particular ex-

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amples, superficially viewed, a thorough examination of the subject will evince, that the art of war is at once comprehensive and complicated; that it demands much previous study; and that the possession of it, in its most improved and perfect state, is always of great moment to the security of a nation. This, therefore, ought to be a serious care of every government; and for this purpose, an academy, where a regular course of instruction is given, is an obvious expedient, which different nations have successfully employed.

The compensations to the officers of the United States, in various instances, and in none more than in respect to the most important stations, appear to call for legislative revision. The consequences of a defective provision are of serious import to the government. If private wealth is to supply the defect of public retribution, it will greatly contract the sphere within which the selection of characters for office is to be made, and will proportionally diminish the probability of a choice of men able as well as upright. Besides that it would be repugnant to the vital principles of our government virtually to exclude, from public trusts, talents and virtue, unless accompanied by wealth.

On Keeping a Diary and Accounts

To George Washington Parke Custis

PHILADELPHIA, 11 January, 1797.

Dear Washington: It was not my wish to check your correspondences—very far from it; for with proper characters (and none can be more desirable than with your papa and Mr. Lear) and on proper subjects, it will give

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you a habit of expressing your ideas upon all occasions with facility and correctness. I meant no more, by telling you we should be content with hearing from you once a week, than that these correspondences were not to be considered as an injunction or an imposition, thereby interfering with your studies or concerns of a more important nature. So far am I from discountenancing writing of any kind (except upon the principle above mentioned) that I should be pleased to hear, and you yourself might derive advantages from a short diary (recorded in a book) of the occurrences which happen to you within your sphere. Trifling as this may appear at first view, it may become an introduction to more interesting matters. At any rate, by carefully preserving these, it would afford you more satisfaction in a retrospective view, than what you may conceive at present.

Another thing I would recommend to you—not because I want to know how you spend your money—and that is, to keep an account book, and enter therein every farthing of your receipts and expenditures. The doing of which would initiate you into a habit, from which considerable advantages would result. Where no account of this sort is kept, there can be no investigation; no corrections of errors; no discovery from a recurrence thereto, wherein too much, or too little, had been appropriated to particular uses. From an early attention to these matters, important and lasting benefits may follow.

We are well, and all unite in best wishes for you; and with sincere affection, I am always yours.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

On His Daily Life

To James McHenry, Secretary of War

MOUNT VERNON, 29 May, 1797.

Dear Sir: You are at the source of information, and can find things to relate; while I have nothing to say, that could either inform or amuse a Secretary of War in Philadelphia. I might tell him, that I begin my diurnal course with the sun; that, if my hirelings are not in their places at that time I send them messages expressive of my sorrow for their indisposition; that, having put these wheels in motion, I examine the state of things further; and the more they are probed, the deeper I find the wounds are which my buildings have sustained by an absence and neglect of eight years; by the time I have accomplished these matters, breakfast (a little after seven o'clock, about the time I presume you are taking leave of Mrs. McHenry), is ready; that, this being over, I mount my horse and ride around my farms, which employs me until it is time to dress for dinner, at which I rarely miss seeing strange faces, come as they say out of respect for me. Pray, would not the word curiosity answer as well? And how different this from having a few social friends at a cheerful board! The usual time of sitting at table, a walk, and tea, brings me within the dawn of candlelight; previous to which, if not prevented by company, I resolve, that, as soon as the glimmering taper supplies the place of the great luminary, I will retire to my writing-table and acknowledge the letters I have received; but when the lights are brought, I feel tired and disinclined to engage in this work, conceiving that the next night will do as

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well. The next comes, and with it the same causes for postponement, and effect, and so on.

This will account for your letter remaining so long unacknowledged; and, having given you the history of a day, it will serve for a year, and I am persuaded you will not require a second edition of it. But it may strike you, that in this detail no mention is made of any portion of time allotted for reading. The remark would be just, for I have not looked into a book since I came home; nor shall I be able to do it until I have discharged my workmen, probably not before the nights grow longer, when possibly I may be looking in Doomsday-Book.

On a Suggested System of Work

To George Washington Parke Custis

7 January, 1798.

System in all things should be aimed at; for in execution it renders every thing more easy.

If now and then, of a morning before breakfast, you are inclined by way of change, to go out with a gun, I shall not object to it; provided you return by the hour we usually set down to that meal.

From breakfast, until about an hour before dinner (allowed for dressing and preparing for it, that you may appear decent) I shall expect you will confine yourself to your studies; and diligently attend to them; endeavoring to make yourself master of whatever is recommended to, or required of you.

While the afternoons are short, and but little interval between rising from dinner and assembling for tea, you may employ that time in walking or any other recreation.

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After tea, if the studies you are engaged in require it, you will no doubt perceive the propriety and advantages of returning to them, until the hour of rest.

Rise early, that by habit it may become familiar, agreeable, healthy, and profitable. It may, for a while, be irksome to do this, but that will wear off; and the practice will produce a rich harvest forever thereafter; whether in public, or private walks of life.

Make it an invariable rule to be in place (unless extraordinary circumstances prevent it) at the usual breakfasting, dining and tea hours. It is not only disagreeable, but it is also very inconvenient for servants to be running here and there, and they know not where to summon you to them, when their duties, and attendance, on the company who are seated, render it improper.

Saturday may be appropriated to riding; to your gun, and other proper amusements.

Time disposed of in this manner, makes ample provision for exercise, and every useful or necessary recreation; at the same time that the hours allotted for study, *if really applied to it* instead of running up and down stairs, and wasted in conversation with any one who will talk with you, will enable you to make considerable progress in whatever line is marked out for you, and that you may do (?) it, is my sincere wish.

On His Reluctance 'to Return to Public Life

To James McHenry, Secretary of War

MOUNT VERNON, 4 July, 1798.

Dear Sir: The sentiments, which I mean to express to you in this letter on the subject of yours, shall be frank,

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undisguised, and explicit; for I see, as you do, that clouds are gathering, and that a storm may ensue; and I find, too, from a variety of hints, that my quiet under these circumstances does not promise to be of long continuance.

It cannot be necessary for me to promise to you, or to others, who know my sentiments as well, that, to quit the tranquil walks of retirement, and enter the boundless field of responsibility and trouble, would be productive of sensations, which a better pen than I possess would find it difficult to describe. Nevertheless, the principle by which my conduct has been actuated through life would not suffer me, in any great emergency, to withhold any services I could render, required by my country; especially in a case, where its dearest rights are assailed by lawless ambition and intoxicated power, contrary to every principle of justice, and in violation of solemn compact and Laws, which govern all civilized nations; and this, too, with the obvious intent to sow thick the seeds of disunion, for the purpose of subjugating the Government, and destroying our Independence and happiness.

Under circumstances like these, accompanied by an actual Invasion of our territorial rights, it would be difficult at any time for me to remain an idle spectator under the plea of age or Retirement. With sorrow, it is true, I should quit the shades of my peaceful abode, and the ease and happiness I now enjoy, to encounter anew the turmoils of War, to which, possibly, my strength and powers might be found incompetent. These, however, should not be stumblingblocks in *my own* way; but there are other things highly important for me to ascertain and settle, before I could give a decided answer to your question.

First, the propriety in the opinion of the public, (so far as that opinion has been expressed in conversation,)

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of my appearing again on a Public theatre, after declaring the sentiments I did in my Valedictory Address, of September, 1796.

Second, a conviction in my own breast, from the best information that can be obtained, that it is the wish of my country, that the military force of it should be committed to my charge; and,

Third, that the army now to be formed should be so appointed, as to afford a well-grounded hope of its doing honor to the country, and credit to him who commands it in the field.

On each of these heads you must allow me to make observations.

With respect to the first, it will readily be admitted, under the circumstances I at present am, that nothing short of an imperious call would or ought to draw me from Retirement; and, unless this was apparent, the advantages, (if any are expected from the measure,) would not only be weakened, but might be defeated altogether. For the opposers of government, with a view to lessen its influence, would denounce it at once a restless act, evincive of my discontent in retirement, and that my love for it was all a sham. Knowing the purity of my own intentions, such observations would make no impression on my personal feelings, but the necessity thereof in the eyes of the Public ought to be unequivocal; for it would be uncandid in me not to confess, that, although I highly approve of all the defensive and precautionary measures that have been adopted, and wish they had been more energetic, yet that I cannot believe, since the *People* of this country, (on whose defection the calculation was made,) have come forward with such strong and unequivocal assurances to defend at all hazards their Government and Independence, maugre the attempts to divert them from it, that the Di-

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rectory of France, intoxicated and abandoned as it is, will have the folly to invade our territorial rights, otherwise than by predatory attempts on the seaboard; unless their agents and Partisans among us, in defiance of the evidence of their senses, should still have the wickedness and address to make that Government believe, that nothing but a force to give countenance to its friends is wanting to effectuate all they wish. This, Sir, is my opinion, with respect to a *formidable Invasion*. Perhaps, with the information and lights in possession of the Executive, I might think differently.

On the second head I shall be more concise, because, as my whole life has been dedicated to the Service of my country in one shape or another, for the poor remains of it, it is not an object to contend for ease and quiet, when all that is valuable in it is at stake, further than to be satisfied that the sacrifice I should make of these is acceptable and desired by my Country. As neither ambition, Interest, nor personal gratification of any sort could induce me to quit the walks of private life, to be disappointed in the *only* object I should have in view would be mortifying beyond my powers of utterance. And what this public opinion and wish is, on this occasion, I know not; for I have studiously avoided touching on the subject, lest some inference contrary to my meaning should be drawn from it.

I express these ideas not from affectation, for I despise everything that carries the appearance of it, but from the belief, that, as it is the fashion of the present day, set or adopted by the French with whom we are to contend and with great and astonishing success too, to appoint Generals of Juvenile years to lead their armies, it might not be improbable, that similar ideas and wishes might pervade the minds of our citizens. And when to this a fear might

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be added, that age may have wrought too powerfully on my body and mind, to make it advisable to commit so important a trust to my direction.

On the third head you must permit me to dwell a little more at large. If an army was in existence, and an officer were invited to take command of it, his course would be plain, for he would have nothing more to do than to examine the constitution of it, and to inquire into the composition, to enable him to decide; but we have one to form, and much indeed depends upon the formation. If a judicious choice is not made of the principal officers, and above all, of the General Staff, in the first instance, it never can be rectified thereafter. The character, then, of the army would be lost in the Superstructure. The reputation of the Commander-in-Chief would sink with it, and the country be involved in inextricable expense.

It is impossible, I know, for the Executive to be intimately acquainted with the qualifications of the Battalion officers; and perhaps, from the manner in which the Volunteer Corps may offer themselves, little will be left to his choice. The presumption however is, that, as these corps will be composed of respectable citizens, the officers will be good, and worthy of as much confidence as can be placed in untried men. The great desiderata lyes in the appointment of the General Officers of the line, and of the Staff, particularly the latter; and the first consists in a great measure in determining whether they shall be taken from the *old set* of Generals, or formed anew from the most experienced, intelligent, and best proved officers of the late American army, without regard to Grade.

From the want of the list, which I left in the Presidential office, by which my memory could be refreshed as to names, it would be hazardous, and might be improper, to give a decided opinion on this head; but I have no great

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scruple in saying, that I incline strongly to the latter mode; for, if this country is seriously Invaded, our system of warfare must be the very reverse of the last.

I have run into great prolixity, in order to give you a comprehensive view of my ideas on the subject of your letter, and the principles by which I am governed. Without these explanations, the answer might have been conveyed in a few words as follows.

When I retired to the walks of private life, I had no idea, that any event would occur which could induce me to leave them. That the pain I should feel, if it be my fate to do so, cannot easily be expressed; Yet if this Country should be actually Invaded, or such manifestation of a design to do it as cannot be mistaken, I should be ready to render every Service in my power to repel it;—

Provided my declining years are not considered as an objection to the trust, but, on the contrary, (and in support of the partiality which may actuate the President in my favor,) it shall appear unequivocally to you, and to those with whom you act, being at the centre of information from all parts of the Union, and where a Commander for the Troops to be raised must often have been the subject of conversation, that the Public wish was directed to me, notwithstanding my avowed declaration when I retired from office to remain a private Citizen;—

And provided also, That I can have such characters associated with me, as will render the turmoils of War, and the burthen of the Command, as light as the nature of it will admit. For it is well known, that the vicissitudes of war are not within the reach of human controul; and the chances of adding to, are not greater than the hazard of taking from, that reputation which the partiality of the world has been pleased to confer for past services;

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And that not prompted, as I have observed in a former part of this letter, by motives of ambition or Interest to embark again on a theatre so arduous and responsible, I might in the course of events be left with the single consolation of *knowing myself*, though possibly deprived even of the credit of *that* by the malevolence of others; that a sense of duty was the *only* motive, which had induced me to run the risk, and to make the sacrifice of my ease and quiet at the same time.

A Letter of Explanation

To Henry Knox

MOUNT VERNON, 9 August, 1798.

My dear Sir: Your letter of the 29th ultimo has filled my mind with disquietude and perplexity in the extreme; but I will say nothing in reply intentionally, that shall give you a moment's pain. Indeed, from the tenor of your letter, it would seem as if nothing I could say now would be of any avail, after the open, candid, and I think friendly communications in my letter of the 16th of July, assigning reasons for what had been done, which could not, I conceive, be construed into a supposed inferiority on your part by me. But, as there are some things in your letter, which appear to have originated in a misconception of circumstances, justice to myself makes it necessary to explain.

The moment I had resolved to accept the command, with the reservations mentioned in my letter to the President, now before the Public, my first care was to look for co-adjutors with whom I could be happy, and in whom I could place entire confidence. A second thought was not necessary for this in the Majr.—Generals for the augmented

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army; but to arrange them, with an attention to the various views the subject presented, was not easy.

In a free and candid strain I frankly declared to you in my last the principle, and the *only* principle, which operated in the arrangement of Genl. Pinckney; but, as I was more concise on this head as it related to Colo. Hamilton, I will ask your patience while I detail the reasons, which prevailed in this case.

1. Having already informed you of the evidence, (as given to me,) of the public wish that he should be second in command, if I accepted and first, if I did not, it is unnecessary to repeat it. 2. Considering the military establishment of this country was about to take a new form, and to commence as it were *de novo*, without any particular regard to an army which had been disbanded near fourteen years, I conceived that the President, in the choice of officers and arrangement of them, would pay as much attention to circumstances as to former rank. Not supposing, then, that the latter would be viewed in so serious a light, as appears by your letter, I shall readily acknowledge, that I had recourse to no old resolves of Congress, nor did I recollect any that would apply to the case. 3. I might in some measures have been led into this belief, from what happened in consequence of the Insurrection in 1794. Then, you will recollect, Genl. Lee, who had never been more than a Colo. in the army of the U. S., was put over heads of Mifflin, Irvine, Morgan, and Bland, all of whom had been General Officers in the said Service; not because he was Governor of Virginia, for the moment he crossed the Potomac, which he was obliged to do to get at the insurgents, his office and power as Governor ceased. 4. The same communication of the wishes, that Colo. Hamilton might be second in command, conveyed intimation also, that, from his situation and prospects, having a large

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family and no certain dependence but his profession, which was lucrative, something as nearly adequate, as the case would admit, ought to be offered to induce his acceptance, and the 2nd rank was proposed. 5. Though his services during the War were not rendered in the grade of a General Officer, yet his opportunities and experience could not be short of those that did;—and 6, adding these to the important trusts reposed in him in various civil walks of life, he will be found, I trust, upon as high ground as most men in the U. States.

I do not know that these explanations will afford you any satisfaction, or produce any change in your determination, but it was just to myself to make them. If there has been any management in the business, it has been concealed from me. I have had no agency therein, nor have I conceived a thought on the subject, that has not been disclosed to you with the utmost sincerity and frankness of heart. And notwithstanding the insinuations, wch are implied in your letter, of the vicissitudes of friendship, and the inconstancy of mine, I will pronounce with decision, that it ever has been, still is, and, notwithstanding the unkindness of the charge, ever will be, (for aught I know to the contrary,) warm and sincere.

I earnestly wished, on account of that friendship, as well as on the score of military talents, to have had the assistance of you and Colonel Hamilton in the arduous contest with which we are threatened. I wish it still and devoutly, as well on public as on private accounts; for dissensions of this sort will have an unhappy effect among the friends of Government, while it will be sweet consolation to the French partisans, and food for their Pride.

Lengthy as this letter is I must ask leave to make an observation on the following passage in yours, which I hope inadvertently escaped you. Speaking of Genl. Officers

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you say, if so "New England which must furnish the majority of the Army, if one shall be raised, will be without a Major General or have the junr. one.—Whether they will possess such a sense of inferiority as to bear such a state of things patiently—whether their zeal & confidence will thereby be excited, time will discover." I hope in God that at no time, much less the present, when everything sacred & dear is threatened, that local distinctions & little jealousies will be done away.

An Outspoken Letter of Advice

To James McHenry, Secretary of War

[Private and Confidential]

MOUNT VERNON, 10 August, 1798.

My dear Sir: You will consider this letter as private and confidential, dictated by friendship, and flowing from the best intentions. If then anything should be found therein, which may have too much the appearance of plain dealing, look to the motives and manner of the communication, and my apology will be sought for in your candor.

From the moment I accepted my appointment as Commander-in-Chief of the Armies of the United States, I considered myself as nearly allied to the Secretary of War, and entitled to particular attentions from him, notwithstanding I drew no pay, nor was acting in the field. It could not have been supposed had it not otherwise been expressed, that I would be called to the army in the moment of danger as ignorant of its formation, its munitions, and every thing relating thereto, as if I had just dropped from the clouds.

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My solicitude often and strongly expressed, relatively to the formation of the Army, could not but have impressed you with my ideas of its importance; but, if stronger evidence was necessary, the offer I made to go at this hot season, and in other respects inconvenient, to Philadelphia, would be conclusive. But what fruit has it produced? To this moment I am ignorant of every step, that has been taken in the appointment of the Battalion Officers, for recruiting the men, fixing the place of Rendezvous, &c.

Having staked my life, my reputation, my fortune, my ease, tranquillity, and happiness, in support of the Government and Independence of our Country, it is not a little interesting and important for me to be advised of the measures, which you are pursuing to organize and provide for the augmented force. For as that act is absolute, no delay can be admitted; and it is much to be desired, that it may take the field with *éclat*, which will not be effected without great exertion. And, as it will not be supposed that the President, well-disposed, sensible, and zealous as he is, can have many relative ideas in arrangements of this sort, more responsibility will attach to you; and, as the multiplicity of matters and burthens will be great, let me entreat you to call on the Inspector, (allowing him full pay and emoluments,) for assistance. The business of recruiting, in the result, belongs to his Department. Then why not let it commence and be prosecuted, agreeably to your *general* instructions to him, under his auspices?

It is much easier at all times to prevent an evil than to rectify mistakes; it is infinitely better to have a *few* good men than *many* indifferent ones. Officers, whose Recruiting emoluments depend upon *numbers*, will not be very scrupulous in their choice, without the fullest conviction that the Inspection of the men will be as rigid as the Instructions that are given. You would, besides, find

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him in your hurried situation extremely useful in a variety of occurrences, which cannot always be foreseen or provided against. I would have suggested a similar measure, with respect to General Knox, as it related more particularly to Arms and the Ordnance Department, but (under the rose for the present) he seems to be so much dissatisfied with the arrangement of the relative rank of the General Officers, that I have no expectation of his serving.

Let me conclude by requesting to be informed, in what state the formation of the augmented corps is; whether the applications for Commissions are numerous and the characters good; what arrangements are made for recruiting; where the general rendezvous are to be; who are appointed to superintend them; what is the *present* state of your Military supplies; what the means and what the measures for augmenting them. With such truth and sincerity, I remain your affectionate.

On Appointments and Powers

To John Adams, President of the United States

MOUNT VERNON, 25 September, 1798.

Sir: With all the respect, which is due to your public station, and with the regard I entertain for your private character, the following representation is presented to your consideration. If, in the course of it any expression should escape me, which may appear to be incompatible with either, let the purity of my intentions, the candor of my declarations, and a due respect for my own character, be received as an apology.

The subject, on which I am about to address you, is not less delicate in its nature, than it is interesting to

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my feelings. It is the change, which you have directed to be made in the relative rank of the Major-Generals, which I had the honor of presenting to you by the Secretary of War; the appointment of an adjutant-General *after* the first nomination was rejected, and the *prepared* state you are in to appoint a third, if the second should decline, without the least intimation of the matter to me.

It would have been unavailing *after* the nomination and appointment of me to the chief command of the armies of the United States, (without any previous consultation of my sentiments,) to observe to you the delicate situation in which I was placed by that act. It was still less expedient to have dwelt more than I did on my sorrow, at being drawn from my retirement, where I had fondly hoped to have spent the few remaining years, which might be dispensed to me, if not in profound tranquillity, at least without public responsibility. But if you had been pleased, previously to the nomination, to have inquired into the train of my thoughts upon the occasion, I would have told you with the frankness and candor, which I hope will ever mark my character, on what terms I would have consented to the nomination, and you would then have been able to decide whether they were admissible or not.

This opportunity was not afforded *before* I was brought to public view. To declare them *afterwards* was all I could do, and this I did in explicit language to the Secretary of War, when he honored me with your letter of the 7th of July, showed me his powers, and presented the commission. They were, that the General Officers and General Staff of the army should not be appointed without my concurrence. I extended my stipulations no further, but offered to give every information, and render every service in my power, in selecting good officers for the Regiments.

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It would be tedious to go into all the details, which led to this determination, but before I conclude my letter, I shall take the liberty of troubling you with some of them. Previously to the doing of which, however, let me declare, and I do declare in the most unequivocal manner, that I had nothing in view in making this stipulation, than to insure the most eligible characters for these highly responsible offices, conceiving that my opportunities, both in the civil and military administration of the affairs of this country, had enabled me to form as correct an opinion of them as any other could do.

Neither the Secretary of War nor myself entertained any doubt, from your letters to me and Instructions to him, that this was the meaning and object of his mission. Unwilling, however, to let a matter of such serious importance to myself remain upon uncertain ground, I requested *that gentleman* to declare this in his *official letter to you*, supposing, as was the case, that the one I should have the honor of writing to you might be laid before the public, and that to encumber it with stipulations of that sort would be improper. Nay more, as the acceptance was conditional, and you might or might not be disposed to accede to the terms, I requested him to take the commission back, to be annulled or restored according to your conception of the propriety or impropriety of them. His remark upon this occasion was, that it was unnecessary, inasmuch as, if you did not incline to accept my services upon the condition they were offered, you would be under the necessity of declaring it, whilst, on the other hand, silence must be construed into acquiescence. This consideration, and believing that the latter mode would be most respectful, as the other might imply distrust of your intentions, arrested that measure.

This, Sir, is a true, candid, and impartial statement of

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facts. It was the ground on which I *accepted* and *retained* the Commission, and was the authority on which I proceeded to the arrangement, that was presented to you by the Secretary of War.

Having *no idea*, that the General officers for the Provisional army would be nominated at the time they were, I had not even contemplated characters for those appointments.

I will now respectfully ask, in what manner these stipulations on my part have been complied with?

In the arrangement made by me with the Secretary of War, the three Major-Generals stood, Hamilton, Pinckney, Knox; and in this order I expected their commissions would be dated. This, I conceive, must have been the understanding of the Senate, and certainly was the expectation of all those with whom I have conversed. But you have been pleased to order the last to be first, and the first to be last. Of four Brigadiers for the Provisional army, one, whom I never heard of as a military character, has been nominated and appointed, and another is so well known to all those, who served with him in the Revolution, as (for the appointment) to have given the greatest disgust, and will be the means of preventing many valuable officers of that army from coming forward. One adjutant-General has been, and another is ready to be appointed, in case of the nonacceptance of Mr. North, not only without any consultation with me, but without the least intimation of the intention; although in the letter I had the honor to write you on the 4th of July, in acknowledgment of your favor of the 22d of June preceding, and still more strongly in one of the same date to the Secretary of War, which, (while here,) his clerk was I know directed to lay before you, I endeavored to show you in a strong point of view how important it was, that this

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officer, (besides his other qualifications,) should be agreeable to the Commander-in-Chief, and possess his *entire* confidence.

To increase the Powers of the Commander-in-Chief, or to lessen those of the President of the United States, I pray you to be persuaded was most foreign from my heart. To secure able coadjutors, in the arduous task I was about to enter upon, was my *sole* aim. This the public good demanded, and this must have been equally the wish of us both. But to accomplish it required an intimate knowledge of the *component* parts of the characters among us in the higher grades of the late army. And I hope, (without incurring the charge of presumption,) I may add that the opportunities I have had to judge of these are second to none. It was too interesting to me, who had staked every thing which was dear and valuable upon the issue, to trust more to chance than could be avoided. It could not be supposed, that I was insensible to the risk I was about to run, knowing that the chances of losing were at least equal to those of increasing the reputation, which the partiality of the world had been pleased to bestow on me. No one man then acquainted with these circumstances, the sacrifices I was about to make, and the impartiality of my conduct in the various walks of life, could suppose that I had any other object in view, than to obtain the best aids the country afforded, and my judgment could dictate.

If an army had been in actual existence, and you had been pleased to offer the command of it to me, my course would have been plain. I should have examined the constitution of it, looked into the organization, and inquired into the character of its officers, &c. As the army was to be raised, and the officers to be appointed, could it be expected, (as I was no candidate for the office,) that I should

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be less cautious, or less attentive to secure these advantages?

It was not difficult for me to perceive, that, if we entered into a serious contest with France, the character of the war would differ materially from the last we were engaged in. In the latter, time, caution, and worrying the enemy until we could be better provided with arms and other means, and had better disciplined troops to carry it on, was the plan for us. But if we should be engaged with the former, they ought to be attacked at every step, and if possible not suffered to make an establishment in the country, acquiring thereby strength from the disaffected and the slaves, whom I have no doubt they will arm, and for that purpose will commence their operations South of the Potomac.

Taking all these circumstances into view, you will not be surprised at my solicitude to intrench myself as I did; nor is it to be supposed, that I made the arrangement of the three Major-Generals without an eye to possible consequences. I wished for time, it is true, to have effected it, hoping that an amicable adjustment might have taken place; and offered at a very short summons, (inconvenient as it would have been,) to proceed to Philadelphia for that purpose; but as no subsequent notice was taken thereof, I presumed there were operative reasons against the measure, and did not repeat it.

It is proper too I should add, that, from the information which I received from various quarters, and through different channels, I had no doubt in my mind, that the current sentiment among the members of Congress, and particularly among those from New England, was in favor of Colonel Hamilton's being second in command, and this impression has been since confirmed in the most unequivocal manner by some respectable members of that

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body, whom I have myself seen and conversed with on the subject.

It is an invidious task at all times to draw comparisons, and I shall avoid it as much as possible; but I have no hesitation in declaring, that, if the public is to be deprived of the services of Colo. Hamilton in the military line, that the post he was destined to fill will not be easily supplied; and that this is the sentiment of the public, I think I can venture to pronounce. Although Colonel Hamilton has never acted in the character of a General Officer, yet his opportunities, as the principal and most confidential aid of the commander-in-chief, afforded him the means of viewing every thing on a larger scale than those, whose attentions were confined to Divisions or Brigades, who knew nothing of the correspondences of the commander-in-Chief, or of the various orders to, or transactions with the General Staff of the Army. These advantages, and his having served with usefulness in the Old Congress, in the General convention, and having filled one of the most important departments of government with acknowledged abilities and integrity, have placed him on high ground, and made him a conspicuous character in the United States, and even in Europe.

To these, as a matter of no small consideration, may be added, that, as a lucrative practice in the line of his profession is his *most certain* dependence, the inducement to relinquish it must in some degree be commensurate. By some he is considered as an ambitious man, and therefore a dangerous one. That he is ambitious, I shall readily grant, but it is of that laudable kind, which prompts a man to excel in whatever he takes in hand. He is enterprising, quick in his perceptions, and his judgment intuitively great; qualities essential to a military character, and therefore I repeat, that his loss will be irreparable.

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With respect to General Knox, I can say with truth, there is no man in the United States with whom I have been in habits of greater intimacy, no one whom I have loved more sincerely, nor any for whom I have had a greater friendship. But esteem, love, and friendship can have no influence on my mind, when I conceive that the subjugation of our government and independence are the objects aimed at by the enemies of our Peace, and when possibly our all is at stake.

On the Intrigues of the Democrats

To James McHenry, Secretary of War

MOUNT VERNON, 30 September, 1798.

Dear Sir: I have lately received information, which, in my opinion, merits attention. It is, that the brawlers against governmental measures in some of the most discontented parts of this State have all of a sudden become silent; and, it is added, are very desirous of obtaining commissions in the army about to be raised.

This information did not fail to leave an impression upon my mind at the time I received it; but it has acquired strength from a publication I have lately seen in one of the Maryland gazettes, (between the author of which and my informant there should have been no interchange of sentiments to the same effect). The motives ascribed to them are, that in such a situation they would endeavor to divide and contaminate the army by artful and seditious discourses, and perhaps at a critical moment bring on confusion. What weight to give to these conjectures you can judge as well as I. But, as there will be characters enough of an opposite description, who are ready to re-

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ceive appointments, circumspection is necessary. For my opinion is of the first that you could as soon scrub the blackamore white as to change the principle of a profest Democrat, and that he will leave nothing unattempted to overturn the Government of this Country. Finding the resentment of the people at the conduct of France too strong to be resisted, they have in appearance adopted their sentiments, and pretend that, notwithstanding the misconduct of government have brought it upon us, yet, if an invasion should take place, it will be found that *they* will be among the first to defend it. This is their story at all Elections and Election meetings, and told in many instances with effect.

On the Alien and Sedition Laws

To Alexander Spotswood

PHILADELPHIA, 22 November, 1798.

Dear Sir: Your letter of the 13th enclosing a publication under the signature of GRACCHUS, on the alien and sedition laws, found me at this place deeply engaged in business.

You ask my opinion of these laws, professing to place confidence in my judgment. For the compliment of which I thank you. But to give opinions unsupported by reasons might appear dogmatical, especially as you have declared that GRACCHUS has produced "through conviction in your mind of the unconstitutionality and inexpediency of the acts above mentioned." To go into an explanation on these points I have neither leisure nor inclination, because it would occupy more time than I have to spare.

But I will take the liberty of advising such as are not

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“thoroughly convinced,” and whose minds are yet open to conviction, to read the pieces and hear the arguments, which have been adduced in favor of as well as those against, the constitutionality and expediency of those laws, before they decide; and consider to what lengths a certain description of men in our country have already driven, and seem resolved further to drive matters, and then ask themselves if it is not time and expedient, to resort to protecting laws against aliens (for citizens you certainly know are not affected by that law), who acknowledge no allegiance to this country, and in many instances are sent among us (as there is the best circumstantial evidence to prove) for the express purpose of poisoning the minds of our people, and to sow dissensions among them, in order to alienate their affections from the government of their choice, thereby endeavoring to dissolve the Union, and of course the fair and happy prospects, which were unfolding to our view from the revolution.

But, as I have observed before, I have no time to enter the field of politics; and therefore shall only add my best respects to the good family at New Port, and the assurances of being, dear Sir, your very humble servant.

On the Political Situation

To General Lafayette

MOUNT VERNON, 25 December, 1798.

My dear Sir: To give you a complete view of the politics and situation of things in this country would far exceed the limits of a letter, and to trace effects to their causes would be a work of time. But the sum of them may be

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given in a few words, and amounts to this. That a party exists in the United States, formed by a combination of causes, which oppose the government in all its measures, and are determined (as all their conduct evinces) by clogging its wheels indirectly to change the nature of it, and to subvert the constitution. To effect this, no means which have a tendency to accomplish their purposes are left un-essayed. The friends of government, who are anxious to maintain its neutrality, and to preserve the country in peace, and adopt measures to secure these are charged by them as being monarchists, aristocrats, and infractors of the constitution, which, according to their interpretation of it, would be a mere cipher. While they arrogated to themselves (until the eyes of the people began to discover how outrageously they had been treated in their commercial concerns by the Directory of France, and that that was a ground on which they could no longer tread) the sole merit of being the friends of France, when in fact they had no more regard for that nation than for the Grand Turk, further than their own views were promoted by it; denouncing those who differed in opinion, (whose principles are purely American, and whose sole view was to observe a strict neutrality) with acting under British influence, and being directed by her counsels, now with being her pensioners.

This is but a short sketch of what requires much time to illustrate; and is given with no other view, than to show you what would be your situation here at this crisis under such circumstances as it unfolds.

You have expressed a wish, worthy of the benevolence of your heart, that I would exert all my endeavors to avert the calamitous effects of a rupture between our countries. Believe me, my dear friend, that no man can deprecate an event of this sort with more horror than I

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should, and that no one, during the whole of my administration, labored more incessantly, and with more sincerity and zeal, than I did, to avoid this, and to render every justice, nay favor, to France, consistent with the neutrality, which had been proclaimed, sanctioned by Congress, approved by the State legislatures, and the people at large in their town and county meetings. But neutrality was not the point at which France was aiming; for, whilst it was crying *Peace, Peace*, and pretending that they did not wish us to be embroiled in their quarrel with Great Britain, they were pursuing measures in *this country* so repugnant to its sovereignty, and so incompatible with every principle of neutrality, as must inevitably have produced a war with the latter. And when they found, that the government *here* was resolved to adhere steadily to its plan of neutrality, their next step was to destroy the confidence of the people in and to separate them from it; for which purpose their diplomatic agents were specially instructed, and in the attempt were aided by inimical characters among ourselves, not, as I observed before, because they loved France more than any other nation, but because it was an instrument to facilitate the destruction of their own government.

On Parties and Factions

To Patrick Henry

[Confidential]

MOUNT VERNON, 15 January, 1799.

Dear Sir: At the threshold of this letter I ought to make an apology for its contents; but, if you will give me

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credit for my motives, I will contend for no more, however erroneous my sentiments may appear to you.

It would be a waste of time to attempt to bring to the view of a person of your observation and discernment, the endeavors of a certain party among us to disquiet the public mind among us with unfounded alarms; to arraign every act of the administration; to set the people at variance with their government; and to embarrass all its measures. Equally useless would it be to predict what must be the inevitable consequences of such policy, if it cannot be arrested.

Unfortunately, and extremely do I regret it, the State of Virginia has taken the lead in this opposition. I have said the *State*, because the conduct of its legislature in the eyes of the world will authorize the expression, because it is an incontrovertible fact, that the principal leaders of the opposition dwell in it, and because no doubt is entertained I believe, that, with the help of the chiefs in other States, all the plans are arranged and systematically pursued by their followers in other parts of the Union, though in no State except Kentucky, that I have heard of, has legislative countenance been obtained beyond Virginia.

It has been said that the great mass of the citizens of this State are well-affected, notwithstanding, to the general government and the Union; and I am willing to believe it, nay, do believe it; but how is this to be reconciled with their suffrages at the elections of representatives, both to Congress and their State legislature, who are men opposed to the first, and by the tendency of their measures would destroy the latter? Some among us have endeavored to account for this inconsistency, and, though convinced themselves of its truth, they are unable to convince others, who are unacquainted with the internal policy of this State.

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One of the reasons assigned is, that the most respectable and best qualified characters amongst us will not come forward. Easy and happy in their circumstances at home, and believing themselves secure in their liberties and property, will not forsake their occupations, and engage in the turmoil of public business, or expose themselves to the calumnies of their opponents, whose weapons are detraction.

But, at such a crisis as this, when every thing dear and valuable to us is assailed; when this party hangs upon the wheels of government as a dead weight, opposing every measure that is calculated for defence and self-preservation, abetting the nefarious views of another nation upon our rights, preferring, as long as they durst contend openly against the spirit and resentment of the people, the interest of France to the welfare of their own country, justifying the first at the expense of the latter; when every act of their own government is tortured, by constructions they will not bear, into attempts to trample and infringe upon the constitution with a view to introduce monarchy; when the most unceasing and the purest exertions, which were making to maintain a neutrality, proclaimed by the executive, approved unequivocally by Congress, by the State legislatures, nay, by the people themselves in various meetings, and to preserve the country in peace, are charged as a measure calculated to favor Great Britain at the expense of France, and all those, who had any agency in it are accused of being under the influence of the former and her pensioners; when measures are systematically and pertinaciously pursued, which must eventually dissolve the Union or produce coercion; I say, when these things are become so obvious, ought characters who are best able to rescue their country from the pending evil to remain at home? Rather ought they not to come

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forward, and by their talents and influence stand in the breach, which such conduct has made on the peace and happiness of this country, and oppose the widening of it?

Vain will it be to look for peace and happiness, or for the security of liberty or property, if civil discord should ensue. And what else can result from the policy of those among us, who, by all the measures in their power, are driving matters to extremity, if they cannot be counteracted effectually? The views of men can only be known, or guessed at, by their words or actions. Can those of the *leaders* of opposition be mistaken, then, if judged by this rule? That they are followed by numbers, who are unacquainted with their designs, and suspect as little the tendency of their principles, I am fully persuaded. But, if their conduct is viewed with indifference, if there is activity and misrepresentation on one side, and supineness on the other, their numbers accumulated by intriguing and discontented foreigners under proscription, who were at war with their own governments, and the greater part of them with *all* governments, they will increase, and nothing short of Omniscience can foretell the consequences.

I come now, my good Sir, to the object of my letter, which is, to express a hope and an earnest wish, that you will come forward at the ensuing elections (if not for Congress, which you may think would take you too long from home), as a candidate for representative in the General Assembly of this commonwealth.

There are, I have no doubt, very many sensible men, who oppose themselves to the torrent, that carries away others who had rather swim with than stem it without an able pilot to conduct them; but these are neither old in legislation, nor well known in the community. Your weight of character and influence in the House of Representatives would be a bulwark against such dangerous sentiments,

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as are delivered there at present. It would be a rallying-point for the timid and an attraction of the wavering. In a word, I conceive it of immense importance at this crisis, that you should be there; and I would fain hope, that all minor considerations will be made to yield to the measure.

If I have erroneously supposed that your sentiments on these subjects are in unison with mine, or if I have assumed a liberty, which the occasion does not warrant, I must conclude as I began, with praying that my motives may be received as an apology, and that my fear, that the tranquillity of the Union, and of the State in particular, is hastening to an awful crisis, has extorted them from me.

With great and very sincere regard and respect, I am, dear Sir, your most obedient, &c.

Orders for a Uniform

To James McHenry, Secretary of War

[Private]

MOUNT VERNON, 27 January, 1799.

My dear Sir: On reconsidering the uniform for the Commander-in-Chief, it has become a matter of doubt with me, (although, as it respects myself *personally*, I was against *all* embroidery,) whether embroidery on the Cape, Cuffs, and Pockets of the Coat, and none on the buff waistcoat, would not have a disjointed and awkward appearance. It is neither required nor forbidden. Which then, in your judgment, or that of connoisseurs, if you should confer with any on the subject, would be most agreeable in itself, and accordant to what is expected?

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To *you* I submit the matter, as I also do whether the coat shall have slash Cuffs, (with blue flaps passing through them,) and slash pockets, or both shall be in the usual manner.

These apparently are trifling matters to trouble you with; but, as it is the commencement of a new scene, it is desirable that the thing should take a right direction. I have therefore upon the whole, and since I began this letter, determined to direct Mr. McAlpin to apply to and follow your directions in making the uniform. I should not prefer a heavy embroidery, or one containing much work. A light and neat one would in my opinion be more elegant and more desirable, as well for the Coat as the Waistcoat, if the latter is to receive any. If there are workers in this way in Philadelphia (and the French are most likely to understand it), they will no doubt have a variety of patterns to choose from, and I pray you to examine them.

The eagle, too, having become part of the American cockade; have any of them been brought into use yet? My idea of the size is, that it ought not to be larger, than would cover a quarter of a dollar at most, and should be represented (for the officers) as clothed with feathers. This any ingenious silversmith can execute; and, if four were sent to me, I would thank you, and would remit the cost as soon as known to me.

I must further beg, that proper stars for the epaulets (the latter I possess) may be sent to me with the other articles, that I may be equipped in dress *at least*; and if there are any handsome cockades (but not whimsically foolish) in wear, or any one who can make them, I should be glad if they were sent with the eagles fixed thereon, ready to be placed in the hats. Does the Presidt, and yourself wear them? Excuse this scrawl and trouble, as

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

I wish to set out right; and be assured of the sincere esteem & regard of, dear Sir, your affectionate.

A Stern Reproof

To James Welch

MOUNT VERNON, 7 April, 1799.

Sir: I have received your letters of the 10th of March from Rockingham County, and although I have no expectation of deriving any payment from your Kentucky Expedition, yet, I will (inconvenient as it is to me) wait a while longer to know the result of it; desiring you to be persuaded in the mean time, that you have not got a person *now*, that will be trifled with in your dealings.

It would be uncandid, Mr. Welch, not to inform you, that I have heard too much of your character lately not to expect tale after tale, and relation after relation, of your numerous disappointments, by way of excuses for the non compliance of your agreement with me;—but this I can assure you will not answer your purposes.

It is not difficult for a person who has no ground on which to expect a thousand cents, to talk with facility and ease of his expectation of receiving ten times as many dollars—the relation of disappointments in which, according to his account, he conceives is quite sufficient to ward off the payment of his own solemn contracts, and to satisfy his Creditors.

I am not unacquainted, Sir, with your repeated declarations of your having purchased my Lands on the Great Kanahwa and endeavoring by that means, and such like impositions, and misrepresentations, to obtain extensive credit where you were not known.—Letters, to enquire into

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the truth of these things, have been written to me on the subject. Be cautious therefore how you provoke explanations that must inevitably end in your disgrace and entire loss of character.—A character is valuable to all men, and not less so to a Speculator.

I will before I conclude, assure you in the most unequivocal terms of two things.

First, that I am in extreme want of the money which you gave me a solemn promise I should receive the first of January last; and secondly—that however you may have succeeded in imposing upon, and deceiving others, you shall not practice the like game with me with impunity.

To contract new Debts is not the way to pay old ones.—nor is it a proof that you have any disposition to do it, when you are proposing to buy lands, &c. &c. on credit (or partial advances) which can answer no other purpose than that of speculation—or (if you have them) of withholding the means which ought to be applied in the discharge of engagements & debts, proceeding therefrom, which you are bound by every tie to do.

Consider this letter well;—and then write without any deception to, Sir.

On Refusal to be a Candidate

To Governor Jonathan Trumbull

MOUNT VERNON, 21 July, 1799.

My dear Sir: I remember well the conversation which you allude to, and have not forgot the answer I gave you. In my judgment it applies with as much force *now* as *then*; nay more, because at that time the line between

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parties was not so clearly drawn, and the views of the opposition so clearly developed as they are at present: of course, allowing your observation (as it respects myself) to be founded, personal influence would be of no avail.

Let that party set up a broomstick, and call it a true son of liberty,—a democrat,—or give it any other epithet that will suit their purpose, and it will command their votes *in toto*.

Will not the Federalists meet, or rather defend their cause, on the opposite ground? Surely they must, or they will discover a want of policy, indicative of weakness and pregnant of mischief; which cannot be admitted. Wherein, then, would lie the difference between the present gentleman in office, and myself?

It would be matter of sore regret to me, if I could believe that a serious thought was turned towards me as his successor, not only as it respects my ardent wishes to pass through the vale of life in retirement, undisturbed in the remnant of the days I have to sojourn here, unless called upon to defend my country (which every citizen is bound to do), but on public ground also; for, although I have abundant cause to be thankful for the good health with which I am blessed, yet I am not insensible to my declination in other respects. It would be criminal, therefore, in me, although it would be the wish of my countrymen, and I could be elected, to accept an office under this conviction, which another would discharge with more ability; and this, too, at a time when I am thoroughly convinced I should not draw a *single* vote from the anti-Federal side, and, of course, should stand upon no other ground than any other Federal character well supported; and, when I should become a mark for the shafts of envenomed malice and the basest calumny to fire at,—when I should be charged not only with irresolution, but with

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concealed ambition, which waits only an occasion to blaze out,—and in short, with dotage and imbecility.

All this, I grant, ought to be like dust in the balance, when put in competition with a *great* public good, when the accomplishment of it is apparent. But, as no problem is better defined in my mind than that principle, not men, is now, and will be, the object of contention; and that I could not obtain a solitary vote from that party; that any other respectable Federal character would receive the same suffrages that I should; that at my time of life (verging towards threescore and ten) I should expose myself, without rendering any essential service to my country, or answering the end contemplated; prudence on my part must arrest any attempt of the well-meant but mistaken views of my friends to introduce me again into the chair of government.

Lengthy as this letter is, I cannot conclude it without expressing an *earnest* wish that some intimate and confidential friend of the President's would give him to understand that his long absence from the seat of government, in the present critical conjuncture, affords matter for severe animadversion by the friends of government, who speak of it with much disapprobation, while the other party chuckle at and set it down as a favorable omen for themselves. It has been suggested to me to make this communication, but I have declined it, conceiving that it would be better received from a private character, more in the habits of social intercourse and friendship.

OF GEORGE WASHINGTON

A National Military Academy

To Alexander Hamilton

MOUNT VERNON, 12 December, 1799.

Sir: I have duly received your letter of the 28th ultimo, enclosing a copy of what you had written to the Secretary of War, on the subject of a Military Academy.

The establishment of an Institution of this kind, upon a respectable and extensive Basis, has ever been considered by me as an object of primary importance to this Country; and while I was in the Chair of Government, I omitted no proper opportunity of recommending it, in my public speeches and other ways, to the attention of the Legislature. But I never undertook to go into a *detail* of the Organization of such an Academy; leaving this task to others whose pursuits in the paths of Science, and attention to the arrangements of such Institutions, had better qualified them for the execution of it. For the same reason I must now decline making any observations on the details of your plan; and as it has already been submitted to the Secretary of War, through whom it would naturally be laid before Congress, it might be too late for alterations if any should be suggested.

I sincerely hope that the subject will meet with due attention, and that the reasons for its establishment which you have so clearly pointed out in your letter to the Secretary, will prevail upon the Legislature to place it upon a permanent and respectable footing.

LIFE OF WASHINGTON

George Washington was born at Bridges Creek, Virginia, on February 11 (O. S.), 1732. He came of good old English stock; his great-grandfather John, who came to Virginia about 1658, belonging to an old county family of Northamptonshire. Washington's father died when the boy was but eleven years old, leaving his large family in somewhat straitened circumstances. After some little schooling and a special course in mathematics, Washington at sixteen began life as a surveyor, and prospered. His surveying expeditions into the Shenandoah valley and beyond marked him out as the most suitable messenger to warn the French, in 1753, to abandon their attempt to seize the Forks of the Ohio. Then followed his unsuccessful expedition to Great Meadows, and his service under Braddock, where Washington's coolness and bravery saved the expedition from utter destruction. At the close of the French and Indian War he had won the foremost place among Colonial officers.

Meanwhile, in 1759, Washington had married Martha Dandridge, widow of Daniel Parke Custis. The death of his brother and niece and his marriage made him one of the richest men in the Colonies. He settled down at Mount Vernon to the attractive life of the Virginia planter, improved his estate, became a member of the House of Burgesses and the honored friend of the leading men of the colony, and passed the happiest years of his life. When the quarrel with the Mother country broke out he gave the radical party his quiet but earnest support in

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the local Legislature and the Continental Congresses. With his appointment as commander in chief in 1775 he became the leading figure in the Revolution. His subsequent career is the common knowledge of all Americans.

From early youth Washington was singularly reserved and self-restrained. Even his earliest letters tell us disappointingly little about the man himself. He is one of the most silent men in history. The older biographers have contrived a fictitious figure; Weems, an impossible prig and wearisome pattern of all the virtues, Sparks, a grand and awe-inspiring figure, but remote and shadowy. In reality Washington was a man of strong passions and deep affections. No one who heard the scathing rebuke to Charles Lee at Monmouth ever forgot it; his letters reflect his loving care of his wife and mother and numerous nieces and nephews. He could appreciate a good story and rolled on the grass in a gale of laughter at an amusing anecdote by one of his aides-de-camp. Like Jefferson, his heart was always at his plantation, and unlike Jefferson, he was a successful man of business. Behind the barrier of sobriety and self-repression, Washington was thoroughly human.

It was the character of Washington which made him a great man in the world's history. In men of unusual ability the Revolutionary period was wonderfully rich. Perhaps in mere military ability, even in genius for administration, other leaders might have been found, but it is well nigh inconceivable that without Washington the Revolution could have been successful. It was the confidence of all classes and sections in his ability and disinterestedness that held the Revolutionary army together after the loss of New York and Philadelphia; it was his courage and patient determination that held the States to their duty and stifled local jealousies. After independence

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was secure Washington's insistence on a stronger union, his support of the Constitution and the new Government reconciled the distrustful and jealous States to the new Union. Throughout the long struggle the confidence in Washington was the one indispensable factor. And how completely was the confidence justified! More than once a weaker man would have seen in a dictatorship the only hope; at Newburg the victorious army was ready to follow Washington against Congress itself. But alone among revolutions, the American upheaval did not result in anarchy or military despotism. The nation's escape was due to the patient courage and absolute honesty of George Washington.

STORY OF THE BOOK

The first Writings published under the name of Washington were, curiously enough, a series of fabricated "Letters from General Washington to Several of his Friends in the Year 1776," issued at London in 1777. The fabrication was an ingenious one, and purported to prove that Washington was not in sympathy with the radical party in America and despaired of success. In 1795 Washington's Letters to Congress were published in London, and a year later these two collections with some additional matter were reprinted in New York, as an anti-Federalist campaign document.

Meanwhile Washington's letter books and transcripts, admirably arranged, were locked up in Mount Vernon in the fire-proof vault he had built for them. In 1827, Jared Sparks, later Professor of History and President of Harvard College, examined them and received permission from Judge Bushrod Washington, at that time owner of Mount Vernon, to remove such as he needed to Cambridge. Here for ten years, in the old Craigie house, Washington's headquarters in 1775-76 and later the home of Longfellow, Sparks worked on his edition of the Writings of Washington (1833-37). Sparks sought to complete his information by drawing on private collections and even visited Europe in his search. His twelve volumes remained until 1889 the only general collection of Washington's Writings. The manuscripts were purchased by Congress in 1834 and 1849.

In spite of his conscientious and enthusiastic labors,

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Sparks' edition was severely criticized from the first and became the center of a rather acrimonious dispute as to the editor's honesty and ability. The justifiable criticism was based on two unfortunate practices of the editor: the omission or suppression of passages which the editor regarded as unimportant, redundant, or unfortunate in their criticisms, without any indications of the omissions; and the rewriting of many of the letters. Unfortunately Sparks had discovered certain early letter books in which Washington in his more mature years had carefully revised his youthful productions and carefully eliminated the crudities of thought and expression. Sparks, in his profound reverence for his hero, sought to do the same for all the letters and did not hesitate to change capitalization, spelling, punctuation and phraseology. When many of the same letters were printed in memoirs and biographies, Sparks' honesty was violently attacked, but to-day he stands acquitted of all but poor judgement and unscientific methods.

The Sparks' edition is now superseded by that of W. C. Ford (14 vols., 1889-93), on which this book is based; an edition characterized by excellent judgment in selection and great accuracy in editing. A large number of Washington's Letters may be found in the biographies and memoirs of his contemporaries, as of Reed and Lee; other collections have been published by the Massachusetts Historical Society and the Long Island Historical Society; still others have appeared in periodicals, notably the Magazine of American History. A complete Bibliography of Washington items published up to 1889 may be found in W. S. Baker, *Bibliotheca Washingtonia*.

Washington, unlike so many of the Revolutionary leaders, cannot be considered a master of English. He wrote as he thought, calmly, slowly and patiently, even a little

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awkwardly. His extreme self-restraint, his sense of the fitting and the dignified, kept him from those outbursts of playfulness or temper, from the delightful play of fancy, from the eminently personal touches which give such a charm to the writings of Jefferson. But throughout all that Washington wrote the character of the man is clearly evident; nowhere can we see so plainly his unselfish devotion to his country, his stern sense of duty and his absolute honesty.

NOTES ON THE TEXT

7 *On a Youthful Attachment.* The identity of the "Lowland Beauty" is uncertain, as Washington seems to have been an impressionable youth. It is probable that the reference is to Lucy Grymes, later wife of Henry Lee, mother of "Legion Harry," and grandmother of Robert E. Lee. "His Lordship" was Lord Thomas Fairfax, for whom Washington made his first surveying expedition.

8 *Journey to the Ohio.* This journey was undertaken under the orders of Governor Dinwiddie, to warn the French to cease their aggressions on the Ohio. Gist was a famous Indian trader and fighter.

9 *Application for a Commission.* Washington was appointed second in command in the expedition against Fort Duquesne, and took control on the disability of Colonel Fry.

10 *Governor Dinwiddie.* Governor of Virginia 1752-58.

12 *Fight at Great Meadow.* This engagement was the first bloodshed in the French and Indian War. Early in July Washington was surrounded by a much superior force and compelled to surrender and withdraw to Virginia.

14 *Proposal to become a Candidate.* Washington was not elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses until 1758.

15 *Braddock's Defeat.* Washington did not mention that it was his coolness and the bravery of the despised Colonial Militia that saved the ill-fated expedition from utter destruction.

17 *Distress on the Frontier.* From 1755 to 1758 Washington was in command of the frontier posts in Virginia. His experience was of enormous advantage to him

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in his later career. John Robinson was Speaker of the House of Burgesses and Treasurer of the Colony.

31 *To His Betrothed.* Washington met Martha Dandridge, widow of Daniel Parke Custis, in the spring of 1758, and proposed and was accepted at their second meeting. The marriage took place January 6, 1759. It is said that Mrs. Washington destroyed all her letters from her husband after his death; certainly very few have been preserved.

32 *Colonel Bouquet.* Henry Bouquet (1719-1766), a Swiss soldier of fortune, after service in the Low Countries, entered the English army in America in 1756. He was second in command in Forbes's successful expedition against Fort Duquesne, in 1763 broke up Pontiac's conspiracy, and was sent against the southern Indians. He died at Pensacola.

33 *Mrs. George William Fairfax.* There is some reason to believe that Miss Cary, wife of George William Fairfax, was the object of Washington's early and most serious passion, and that he never forgot it.

39 *Advantages of the West.* From his first surveying expedition Washington regarded the West as destined to become the most valuable part of the country. He invested largely in bounty lands, visited the Ohio several times, and took a prominent part in the old Ohio Company and other extensive schemes. In his will he describes over 49,000 acres of western land, which he estimated as worth over \$325,000—more than half his entire estate.

45 *On Passive Resistance to Great Britain.* George Mason, the neighbor and intimate friend of Washington, was probably his most influential adviser at this time, and the Resolutions which he offered at the next Meeting of the Assembly were doubtless due in part to Mason. The non-importation agreement here proposed was adopted, but was

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not very well observed. Mason took a very prominent part in the Revolutionary movement in Virginia, and in the formation of the Virginia and the National Constitution.

48 *Dr. Jonathan Boucher.* Rector of St. Mary's and schoolmaster of Washington's step-son John Parke Custis.

50 *Portrait by Peale.* For a description of this and other portraits of Washington, see Baker, Engraved Portraits of Washington.

50 *On Custis' Betrothal.* Washington was deeply attached to his two step-children and spent much time and thought on their upbringing. Early in 1773 he placed the boy, John Parke Custis, in King's (Columbia) College, but he soon withdrew, and in 1774 married Eleanor Calvert. He died in 1781, leaving four children whom Washington provided for as his own grandchildren.

53 *Colonel Burwell Bassett.* A neighboring planter.

54 *Defence of Resistance by the Colonists.* By this time Washington was one of the most active and influential leaders of the radical party in Virginia, and shortly after was chosen a delegate to the Continental Congress. The Fairfaxes being recent immigrants were naturally opposed to resistance.

58 *The Fight for Justice.* As this letter was written during the meeting of the first Continental Congress, it is especially interesting as reflecting public opinion in 1774. Captain MacKenzie was a British officer stationed at Boston and a former acquaintance of Washington.

61 *Acceptance of Appointment.* On June 15, 1775, Congress having resolved "That a general be appointed to command all the continental forces raised or to be raised for the defence of American liberty," proceeded to a choice, and the ballots being taken, George Washington, esq., was unanimously elected. On the following day the President

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formally notified Washington of this action, and he, standing in his place, answered in the words of the text.

65 *General Thomas.* John Thomas (1725-1776) was educated as a physician, served as a Colonel in the French and Indian War, and became a brigadier general in 1775. He heeded Washington's remonstrance, took a prominent part in the siege of Boston, became a major general in 1776, succeeded the unfortunate Montgomery in command of the Canadian expedition, and died near Montreal.

68 *Further Correspondence Declined.* On August 11, 1775, Washington wrote to Gage, remonstrating at the ill treatment offered the American officers prisoners in Boston. Gage replied in a lofty strain, lecturing Washington on the iniquity of "treason," etc. The correspondence was published by Congress.

70 *Conciliation of the Canadians.* The Americans hoped to conquer Canada and win over the French to the revolutionary cause. Montgomery with some 1,500 men reached the St. Lawrence by way of Lake Champlain, captured Montreal, and at Quebec joined Arnold, who had made a desperate march up the Kennebec and through the wilds of Maine. In the assault that followed Montgomery was killed and Arnold severely wounded. The French remained neutral and Canada was abandoned in 1776.

71 *Joseph Reed.* Joseph Reed (1741-1785) was educated at Princeton and at the Middle Temple, London. He took a prominent part in the resistance in Pennsylvania as member of the Committee of Correspondence and President of the Provincial Congress. In 1775 he was chosen a member of the Second Continental Congress, resigning to become aide-de-camp and secretary to Washington. Later he re-entered Congress, and from 1778 to 1781 was President of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania.

74 *Lund Washington.* Lund Washington was the

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agent for supervising General Washington's plantations and business interests during the Revolution. His relationship to General Washington is untraced.

76 *Major-General Schuyler*. Philip Schuyler (1733-1804) reached the rank of major in the French and Indian war and entered the Second Continental Congress, and soon after was made major-general. As Commander of the Northern Department he organized the Canadian expedition, but was unable to lead it because of ill health. He was very unpopular with the New England troops and delegates and resigned in disgust, but his resignation was not accepted. In 1777 he was succeeded by Gates, whose defeat of Burgoyne was due chiefly to Schuyler's preparations. In 1779 he was tried by court-martial, acquitted with the highest honor, and allowed to retire. Later he became the leader of one of the great political factions in New York, held many state offices, and was twice United States Senator. Alexander Hamilton was his son-in-law.

82 *General Montgomery*. Richard Montgomery (1736-1775), an Irishman by birth, saw much service in the British army in America, 1757 to 1765, rising to the rank of captain. In 1772 he sold his commission and emigrated to New York. He was chosen a member of the Provincial Congress in 1775, and created brigadier and major-general in the same year. Owing to the illness of Schuyler he led the Canadian expedition and fell at the head of his troops in the assault on Quebec.

87 *Phillis Wheatley*. Phillis Wheatley (1753-1794) was a negro poetess who attracted much attention in America and Great Britain. After a careful education at Boston by her owner, Mrs. Wheatley, she showed some literary ability and was taken to England. There she published a volume of poems dedicated to the Countess of Huntington and created some sensation. On her return she published

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several other poems, including an Address to Washington, probably the poem referred to in the text.

88 *Want of Powder*. On one occasion during the siege of Boston the American forces were reduced to some nine rounds per man, and found great difficulty in securing an adequate supply until the French came to their aid.

90 *Loyalists*. About eleven hundred loyalist refugees left Boston for Halifax when the British evacuated the town. They represented some of the best blood in the colony, and their descendants to-day are the leading families in the Provinces. Washington repeatedly deprecated the harsh measures adopted against the loyalists.

92 *Aides-de-Camp*. A complete list of Washington's aids may be found in Ford: Writings of Washington, xiv, 432-433.

96 *Qualifications of General Sullivan*. John Sullivan (1740-1795) was appointed a brigadier from New Hampshire in 1775 and took part in the siege of Boston; he led the Canadian expedition back in safety and became a major-general in 1776. He was captured at Long Island, exchanged, and fought at Trenton, Princeton, Brandywine, and Germantown, and about Newport. He is best known for his successful expedition against the Iroquois Indians in 1779. After the war he served as President of New Hampshire and Judge of the United States District Court.

97 *Declaration of Independence*. "The several brigades are to be drawn up this evening on their respective Parades, at six o'clock, when the declaration of Congress, shewing the grounds & reasons of this Measure, is to be read in an audible voice."—Orderly Book, 9 July, 1776.

99 *On His Proper Title*. Lord Howe, who had favored the American contentions in Parliament, came over with rather indefinite powers to open a negotiation. Washington and the radical leaders dreaded the result and were no

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doubt glad to avoid formal communications. Howe finally issued a circular letter to the Royalist governors, but they were in prison or fugitives. Congress published the letter which simply offered forgiveness for unconditional submission.

102 *Check of August 27.* The battle of Long Island, a rather desultory and ill-managed engagement, in which the Americans lost 1,500 men and Generals Stirling and Sullivan were captured. Two nights later Washington withdrew to the mainland from a position rendered untenable by the British fleet.

117 *General Lee.* Charles Lee (1731-1782) was a soldier of fortune of English birth who had served in the British army in the French and Indian War, in Portugal, and in the Polish army against the Turks. He came to America in 1773, became an ardent patriot, was appointed major-general in 1775, commanded in the South in 1776, and later led the right wing in the retreat to New Jersey. During his captivity in New York he betrayed the American plans to the British. For his disgraceful behavior at Monmouth in 1777 he was court-martialed, suspended for a year, and later dismissed from the army.

124 *Use of Dictatorial Powers.* "This Congress, having maturely considered the present crisis; and having perfect reliance on the wisdom, vigor, and uprightness of General Washington," resolved to grant him for six months practically unlimited powers in the control of the army and the military operations.

128 *A Plea for Patience.* Arnold at this time was considered by Washington most favorably; as he wrote to Richard Henry Lee, "Surely a more active, a more spirited, and sensible officer fills no department in your army." The delay in Arnold's promotion was due to the fact that Connecticut already had two major-generals.

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129 *Brigadier-General Glover*. John Glover (1732-1797) entered the Revolutionary army as colonel of the Marblehead regiment composed of fishermen and known as the Marine Regiment. He and his men were of extreme value to Washington in the retreat from Long Island and the famous crossing of the Delaware before the battle of Trenton. Glover accepted the appointment as brigadier-general as Washington urged, served against Burgoyne, and was a member of the court which tried Major André. After the war he was a member of the Massachusetts Convention to ratify the Constitution.

130 *Colonel Alexander Spotswood*. Alexander Spotswood married Elizabeth, daughter of Augustine Washington.

138 *Lieutenant-Colonel Alexander Hamilton*. At this time Hamilton was aide-de-camp to Washington.

140 *The Character of General Conway*. Thomas Conway (1733-1800) was an Irish soldier of fortune, educated in France. He left the French army with the rank of colonel, came to America and was made a brigadier-general in 1777. In spite of Washington's remonstrance he was appointed inspector-general with the rank of major-general. After the discovery of the "Conway Cabal" (page 154) he resigned, and served in the French army in India. He was last heard of in 1792, leading an unsuccessful royalist rising in southern France.

140 *Richard Henry Lee*. Richard Henry Lee (1732-1794), a leader of the Virginia planter class, was educated in England, served as Justice of the Peace and Burgess, and took a prominent part in the resistance to Great Britain as member of the Committee of Correspondence and delegate to Congress. He introduced there the Resolution calling for independence. Later he served in the Virginia

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Legislature, and from 1789 to 1792 in the United States Senate.

142 *Battle of Germantown.* After Washington's ineffectual attempt to save Philadelphia at Brandywine, General Howe divided his forces and Washington made a determined attack. All went well until General Sullivan was attacked in the rear by a part of General Greene's brigade, when a panic ensued. The mistake was due in part to the dense fog, and in part to the inability of the inexperienced troops to carry out a rather intricate plan.

145 *Burgoyne's Surrender.* The surrender of Burgoyne was the turning point in the war. Coming as it did after the loss of Philadelphia it gave for the first time some guarantee of success and decided the French to recognize our independence and form an alliance. Burgoyne's disaster was due in part to difficulties of transportation, but chiefly to the lack of the expected coöperation of Howe, which failed because of the inefficiency of the British War Office.

145 *Major-General Putnam.* Israel Putnam (1718-1790), or "Old Put," saw much service in the French and Indian War, including the West India expedition, and led the Connecticut militia to Boston in 1775. He was appointed major-general, but saw little active service in the Revolution.

146 *Major-General Greene.* Nathanael Greene (1725-1786), although of Quaker parentage, was from boyhood greatly interested in military science. In 1770 he entered the Rhode Island Legislature, and in 1775 led the Rhode Island contingent to Boston. He was appointed brigadier-general and in 1776 major-general. He did excellent service at Harlem, Trenton, and Brandywine, and in 1778 became quarter-master general. His chief fame rests on the extremely able defensive campaign in the South in

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1780-81, ending in the expulsion of the British from all but three seaport towns. He is usually ranked second only to Washington in military ability.

147 *The Army at Valley Forge*. The most pathetic thing about that terrible winter is that the sufferings of the army were for the most part needless. There were abundant supplies within reach, but the commissariat department broke down completely.

154 *The Conway Cabal*. Washington's ill success at New York and Philadelphia and Gates's capture of Burgoyne made possible a rather obscure intrigue whose object was to put Gates in command. The movement was especially strong in Congress, which in 1777 appointed Gates head of the reorganized Board of War and Conway inspector-general. The whole intrigue had a fair prospect of success until Wilkinson's indiscretion enabled Washington to meet it in the open. Public opinion and the army then broke up the Cabal.

154 *Major-General Gates*. Horatio Gates (1728-1806) was an English army officer who had served under Braddock and settled in Virginia in 1763. In 1775 he was appointed adjutant-general with the rank of brigadier, to act as expert adviser to Washington. From the first of an intriguing disposition, he displaced Schuyler in the North and received the credit for Burgoyne's surrender. He was discredited by the Conway Cabal, and withdrew for a time from the army. In 1780 he was put in command in the south and disgracefully defeated at Camden. Although he was acquitted by court martial he was thoroughly discredited and dropped out of public life.

156 *Henry Laurens*. Henry Laurens (1724-1792), of Huguenot blood, was one of the more conservative leaders in South Carolina. He was President of the Committee of Safety and delegate to Congress, of which he was President,

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1777-1778. In 1779 he was sent to Holland on a diplomatic mission, was captured by the British, but released to serve on the commission which negotiated peace 1781-1783.

159 *Governor George Clinton.* George Clinton (1739-1812) served in the French and Indian War as lieutenant, was a member of the New York Assembly and a delegate to Congress. From 1777 to 1795 he was Governor of the State of New York and from 1805 to 1812 Vice-President of the United States.

161 *The English Commissioners.* After Burgoyne's surrender and when war with France was imminent, Lord North in February, 1778, introduced and passed through Parliament a series of resolutions granting all the American demands up to July 4, 1776. The British Commissioners with these proposals did not reach America until after the evacuation of Philadelphia by the British. Congress refused to consider any terms which did not include independence. (Compare pages 171, 174.)

164 *Patrick Henry.* Henry at this time was Governor of Virginia.

177 *Fabricated Letters.* These letters in which Washington appears as fighting for independence against his will, were published in London in 1776. They were a very clever forgery. There is some reason to believe that their author was John Randolph, last royal attorney-general of Virginia. The letters may be found in the Ford edition of Washington's Writings.

179 *The Battle of Monmouth.* When Clinton abandoned Philadelphia and withdrew overland to New York, Washington followed after him, determined to force an engagement if a favorable opportunity offered. This seemed to be the case at Monmouth, June 27, 1778, but Charles Lee, who led the van, very nearly brought disaster by his treasonable cowardice. Washington dashed to the front,

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overwhelmed Lee with a torrent of reproof, rallied the troops and restored the battle. During the night Clinton withdrew to a position too strong to be attacked and Washington abandoned the pursuit. This was the last general engagement in the North. Until the battle of Yorktown in 1781 Washington was engaged in watching the British in New York.

180 *Brigadier-General Nelson*. Thomas Nelson (1738-1789) was a Virginia patriot and a signer of the Declaration of Independence.

182 *Gouverneur Morris*. Gouverneur Morris (1752-1816), educated at King's (Columbia College), served in the New York Provincial Congress and in the Continental Congress from 1777 to 1780. From 1781 to 1785 he was Assistant Superintendent of Finance, and devised the plan at the basis of our present system of coinage. He represented Pennsylvania in the Federal Convention and wrote the text of the Constitution. He was later minister to France and senator from New York.

187 *Governor Harrison*. Benjamin Harrison (1740-1791) was a Virginia planter and patriot. From 1777 to 1782 he was Speaker of the House and from 1782 to 1785 Governor. In 1788 he was a member of the Convention to ratify the Constitution. Benjamin Harrison was the father of William Henry Harrison.

192 *Grievances of Officers*. The prospects for an inactive season and the continued jealousy and parsimony of Congress toward the army brought about a very serious discontent in 1779, the officers resigning or openly complaining of their grievances. Congress in alarm voted half-pay to the officers for life, then receded and recommended the States individually to take action. In 1780 half-pay for life was voted, but the question was not settled until the Newburg Addresses.

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195 *Charges of General Lee.* It was this attempt of Lee to refute the criticism of Washington for his behavior at Monmouth that led to his court-martial and ultimately his dismissal.

203 *Governor Trumbull.* A graduate of Harvard and for a time a minister, Jonathan Trumbull (1710–1785) entered mercantile life, studied law, and was elected to the Connecticut Legislature in 1733. From 1740 to 1769 he was assistant or deputy governor, and from 1769 to 1783 governor. He was the only colonial governor in hearty sympathy with the Revolution. There is a long-accepted tradition that Washington called him Brother Jonathan, and that this was the origin of the personification of the United States.

206 *Lord Stirling.* William Alexander (1726–1783) served in the French and Indian War, went to England to urge in vain his title to the earldom of Stirling, and returned to America to take an active part in New York politics. He entered the army as colonel, was appointed brigadier in 1776 and major-general in 1777. He was captured at Long Island, exchanged, and served in the campaign about Philadelphia and at Monmouth. He was a well-educated man and one of the founders and first governor of King's (Columbia) College. Although the House of Lords rejected his claims, he was commonly known in America as Lord Stirling.

211 *Fielding Lewis.* Brother-in-law of Washington.

217 *James Duane.* A New York conservative who strongly resisted radical action and opposed the Declaration of Independence. He then threw in his lot with the radicals and became one of the most useful members of Congress. He was the first Mayor of New York after the Peace and later a United States District Judge.

219 *Arnold's Treason.* The primary object of Arnold's

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treason was the surrender of West Point and the control of the Hudson; it is improbable that there was any idea of capturing Washington. André's misfortune was due to his disregard of Clinton's positive instructions not to go within the American lines, to retain his uniform, and not to carry any papers, and to the integrity of the three common soldiers who captured him. Colonel Jameson, the officer before whom André was taken, very stupidly reported the fact to Arnold and enabled the latter to escape.

220 *Suspension of Gates.* Congress suspended General Gates because of his conduct at the battle of Camden.

222 *American Affairs.* Congress had instructed Colonel Laurens to consult General Washington on the objects of his mission before his departure to France. Laurens proceeded to headquarters, and at his own request received the letter in the text stating Washington's views.

225 *De Rochambeau and De Ternay.* The commanders of the French army and navy in America.

227 *Mrs. Sarah Bache.* Mrs. Sarah Bache, daughter of Benjamin Franklin, was one of the ladies who superintended the contributions in Philadelphia for the relief of the soldiers.

235 *Congratulations.* The occasion for the congratulations was the battle of Eutaw Springs, which practically confined the British to the seaport towns in the South.

237 *Naval Superiority.* As the capture of Cornwallis was made possible by a temporary naval superiority of the French, which cut off the British from re-enforcements or escape, Washington had every reason to emphasize the importance of the control of the sea.

243 *Vermont.* The New Hampshire Grants were long a bone of contention between New Hampshire and New York, until the settlers took matters into their own hands, organized a state government and applied for admis-

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sion to the Union. The opposition of the claimant States blocked the admission until 1791.

246 *James McHenry*. James McHenry (1753-1816) was born in Ireland, came to America in 1771, studied medicine with Dr. Rush, and served as a surgeon in the Continental Army until he became Assistant Secretary to Washington. After the war he served in the Maryland Senate and in Congress, was a delegate to the Federal Convention, and held many state offices. From 1796 to 1800 he was Secretary of War.

247 *A Dishonest Agent*. This letter well illustrates Washington's impatience of injustice or unfair dealing, and the vigorous language he could use when he felt the occasion justified it.

251 *Bushrod Washington*. The favorite nephew of Washington, to whom he bequeathed Mount Vernon, and who became one of the Associate Justices of the Supreme Court.

256 *The Old Leaven*. The same elements that were prominent in the Conway Cabal were involved in the Newburg Addresses, pages 258-261.

258 *The Storm*. After the war was over, both Congress and the States proved very reluctant to do justice to the army, either in the form of half-pay to the officers or anything for the soldiers. In 1782 the army respectfully remonstrated with no result. Finally, in March, 1783, a very able anonymous address was circulated among the officers, urging them to unite and take matters into their own hands. Washington then called a general meeting of the officers, appealed to their patience and patriotism, pledged his efforts to secure justice, and averted the threatened breach with Congress. Congress then granted the officers full pay for five years and promised justice to the soldiers.

263 *Dr. William Gordon*. Dr. William Gordon was a

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dissenting minister in Massachusetts who supported the Revolution, and in 1788 published a history of it. It was not very well received in Great Britain or America, and is now of little importance.

266 *Weakness of Congress.* At this time (1783) Congress was pressing the States for the additional power to levy a small import duty for a limited time to pay the interest on the debt. Seven States agreed, but when Congress brought up the matter again in 1786, New York refused and the proposal was dropped.

274 *Indentured Servants.* A very common form of labor in colonial days. The laborer sold his services for a term of years in return for his transportation, and the captain in turn sold it to a planter.

276 *Little Progeny.* Mrs. Washington brought up the children of her son John Parke Custis.

277 *Major-General Knox.* Henry Knox (1750–1806) was a bookseller of Boston. He fought at Bunker Hill and brought the cannon from Ticonderoga that enabled Washington to expel the British from Boston. He fought in the Northern army against Burgoyne as a brigadier-general, and in 1781 became a major-general. From 1785 to 1795 he was Secretary of War. He was one of Washington's closest personal friends.

284 *Robert Morris.* Robert Morris (1734–1806) was a wealthy Philadelphia merchant. He was one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, and served in the State Legislature during the Revolution. He advanced large sums to the Congress, and in 1781 became Superintendent of Finance. He brought order out of the confused accounts, established the Bank of North America, but resigned in 1784. He was member of the Constitutional Convention and United States senator. Late in life he became involved in western land speculations and died in poverty.

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287 *John Jay*. John Jay (1745-1825) was of Huguenot ancestry, a graduate of King's (Columbia) College and a lawyer in New York. During the Revolution he served on the local Committee of Correspondence and in the first and second Continental Congress. He took a large part in the drafting of the first State constitution and was the first Chief-Justice of New York. From 1779 to 1783 he was minister to Spain and France, and from 1784 to 1789 Secretary of Foreign Affairs. Washington appointed him Chief Justice of the United States. He negotiated the treaty with Great Britain known by his name in 1794, resigned and served as Governor of New York, 1795 to 1801, when he retired from public life.

289 *Tumults in Massachusetts*. In 1786 a serious rising took place in western Massachusetts under the leadership of Daniel Shays. The object of the disaffected, who were chiefly of the debtor class, was to close the courts and secure legislation in their favor. Governor Bowdoin put down the rising with some difficulty. Congress did not venture to offer any open aid, but was organizing a force ostensibly against the Indians, to be used if necessary against the insurgents.

289 *Henry Lee*. "Light Horse" or "Legion Harry" Lee (1756-1818) was a graduate of Princeton, a member of Congress and of the Virginia ratifying convention, and from 1792 to 1795 Governor of Virginia. He led the expedition against the Whiskey Rebellion in 1794, and was a member of Congress 1799-1801, where he delivered the well-known characterization of Washington: "First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen." He was the father of Robert E. Lee.

294 *Colonel David Humphreys*. David Humphreys (1752-1818) was a graduate of Yale and a member of the literary group known as the Hartford Wits. He served as

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an aid to Washington, was prominent in Connecticut politics, and spent the years 1788 to 1790 with Washington at Mount Vernon. In 1791 he was appointed our first minister to Portugal and later to Spain, whence he brought back the first merino sheep to America.

305 *Joel Barlow*. Joel Barlow (1754–1812) was a student at Dartmouth and Yale and a chaplain in the Continental Army. Later he studied law, but is best known as the author of “The Vision of Columbus” and other poems. In 1788 he went abroad as the agent of the unfortunate Scioto Land Company, and remained in France until 1805. He died during the retreat from Moscow while on a diplomatic mission to Napoleon.

312 *George Steptoe Washington*. George Steptoe, son of Samuel Washington, was with his brother Laurence Augustine educated at the expense of his uncle, George Washington.

321 *Mary Wooster*. Mrs. Wooster was the widow of General Wooster, who was mortally wounded at the defence of Danbury in 1777.

322 *Washington's Mother*. Mary (Ball) Washington, second wife of Augustine and mother of George Washington, died August 25, 1789, in the eighty-third year of her age, after a widowhood of forty-six years. We know little about her, but her son seems to have inherited from her much of his dignity, reticence, and good business sense. Mrs. Betty Lewis was the wife of Fielding Lewis.

333 *Harriot Washington*. Harriot, daughter of Samuel, was brought up at her uncle's expense. She developed into a fine woman and married Andrew Parks, of Baltimore.

335 *Gouverneur Morris*. In spite of Washington's friendly advice, Morris made himself very unpopular in France and was recalled in 1794.

342, 343 *Jefferson and Hamilton*. Jefferson and Ham-

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ilton were so diametrically opposite in temperament and politics that they clashed almost from the first in the cabinet. They differed on the financial programme of Hamilton, and especially on the bank until they, as Jefferson expressed it, were like two cocks in a pit. Washington, who was very anxious for a non-partisan administration, succeeded in retaining Jefferson until December, 1793, when he resigned and became the leader of the opposition party.

345 *Edmund Randolph*. Edmund Randolph (1753-1813), a graduate of William and Mary College, was disinherited by his father for joining the patriotic party. During the Revolution he served as Washington's aid, as a member of the Virginia Constitutional Convention, as the first Attorney-General of the State, and in Congress. From 1786 to 1787 he was Governor of Virginia. He headed the state delegation to the Federal Convention, but refused to sign the Constitution, although he afterward supported it. He was the first Attorney-General of the United States and succeeded Jefferson as Secretary of State. He was soon discredited by his indiscreet sympathy with the French ambassador and was dismissed in 1795.

351 *Frances Washington*. Frances (Bassett) Washington was the widow of George Augustine Washington, whose death is here referred to. George Augustine lived at Mount Vernon after 1785, and had general charge of the estate. He was the son of Charles, brother of George Washington.

354 *Edmund Pendleton*. Edmund Pendleton (1721-1803) was a Virginia planter and patriot. He entered the House of Burgesses in 1752, and for many years was its Speaker. During the Revolution he served on the Committee of Correspondence, in Congress, and as President of the Virginia Constitutional Conventions. He was a delegate to the Federal Convention and largely instrumental in the ratification of the Constitution in Virginia. From 1779

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to his death he was President of the Virginia Court of Appeals.

357 *Charles Cotesworth Pinckney*. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney (1746–1825), of South Carolina, was educated at Oxford and the Middle Temple, but on his return took an active part in the local resistance. He became an aid of Washington in 1776, went south in 1778, and was captured at Charleston. He was a delegate to the Federal Convention and to the South Carolina Convention of 1790. He was sent as minister to France in 1796, but not received; in the following year he headed the commission who were involved in the X. Y. Z. correspondence. He was Federalist candidate for Vice-President in 1800 and for President in 1804 and 1808.

362 *Democratic Societies*. These societies originated with Genet, the French minister, and were, he expected, to play a part in America similar to the Jacobin Clubs in France. Genet's extravagant behavior and Washington's denunciation soon destroyed their popularity. It is very doubtful if they ever were the serious menace which Washington believed them; they were of some assistance to Jefferson in organizing the opposition party.

364 *Whiskey Rebellion*. The rising in western Pennsylvania in 1794 against the excise on whiskey was the first serious test of the stability of the new government and its ability to maintain law and order. Washington ordered out the militia of the neighboring States, who responded loyally, and the rising collapsed.

369 *Eleanor Parke Custis*. Eleanor Parke Custis was the daughter of Washington's step-son John Parke Custis. She married Lawrence Lewis, son of Fielding Lewis and Washington's nephew.

375 *Timothy Pickering*. Timothy Pickering (1745–1829), a Massachusetts patriot and politician, was a grad-

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uate of Harvard and bred to the law. During the Revolution he served in the army, on the Board of War, and as quarter-master general. He was the first Postmaster General, then Secretary of War, and from 1795 to 1800 Secretary of State. He became Chief-Justice of the Common Pleas in Massachusetts and represented the State in House and Senate from 1803 to 1817. Throughout he was the leader of the extreme irreconcilable wing of the Federalists and was involved in their obscure intrigues with Great Britain and was perhaps the moving spirit of the Hartford Convention.

377 *Patrick Henry*. Patrick Henry had now (1795) retired from public life, his early radicalism much tempered by wealth and age. Between 1794 and 1796 he declined election as United States Senator and Governor of Virginia, and appointment as Secretary of State, Chief-Justice, and Minister to France.

378 *Jay's Treaty*. Jay's Treaty with Great Britain, probably the best the United States could hope for, was so unpopular with the people that a determined effort was made by the House of Representatives to defeat it after its ratification by the Senate. Washington's firm stand helped to establish a constitutional precedent of great importance.

381 *Partisan Politics*. By this time (1796) Jefferson was the acknowledged leader of the opposition or Democratic-Republican party and its candidate for President. Washington, although still holding to the ideal of a non-partisan administration, was in reality closely identified with the Federalists, and looked to Hamilton as his most trusted adviser. The reserved tone of this letter shows the growing coolness between Washington and Jefferson, which on part of the former developed into distrust and dislike.

384 *Farewell Address*. The Farewell Address of

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Washington has always been regarded as a State Paper of the first importance. Apart from the general spirit which shows so clearly the exalted patriotism of the author, the earnest plea against sectionalism in politics (388-391) against attempts to weaken the central government (392-393) and the anticipation of the Monroe Doctrine (398-402) are especially significant.

403 *George Washington Parke Custis.* George Washington Parke Custis was the son of John Parke Custis, Washington's step-son.

413 *Return to Public Life.* After the insulting behavior of France to our Commissioners in 1797-98, the United States was for nearly two years really at war with France, although no formal declaration was made. The situation was ended by the Treaty of 1800. President Adams was personally unpopular and distrusted by his own Cabinet, who looked to Hamilton for leadership. They convinced Washington, who by general consent was to be commander-in-chief, that the situation demanded that he dictate the appointment of the general officers and that there was a popular demand for Hamilton as second in command. The result was that Washington alienated his life-long friend, General Knox, who was the senior officer in rank, and became involved in a spirited controversy with President Adams, who was naturally loath to surrender his power of appointment. The whole affair was unfortunate and embittered Washington's last years and did much to divide and defeat the Federalists in 1800.

432 *Alien and Sedition Laws.* The Federalists took advantage of the popular indignation against France because of the X. Y. Z. episode to pass a series of acts against aliens and against critics of the Government. As the acts were to a great degree directed at the opposition newspapers and their editors and contributors, and imposed heavy pen-

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alties, they were soon regarded as violations of the liberty of the press and contributed largely to the growing unpopularity of the Federalists.

436 *Virginia Legislature.* As a protest against the Alien and Sedition Laws the Democratic-Republicans passed resolutions in Kentucky and Virginia attacking their constitutionality and presenting forcibly the party creed of strict construction of the Constitution and the limited powers of the central government. Jefferson was the author of the Kentucky Resolutions and Madison of the more moderate ones adopted by Virginia.

442 *Refusal to Become a Candidate.* As the election of 1800 approached, the divided condition of the Federalists and their unpopularity made Washington's willingness to lead the ticket their only hope of success. By this time he was a strict party man and the machinery of political parties was fairly well developed.

445 *National Military Academy.* The plan referred to was accepted by Congress and the Academy established at West Point. This seems to have been the last letter written by Washington; he died two days later.

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